

U.S. judge orders Iran to pay \$250m

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A U.S. judge ordered Iran on Wednesday to pay nearly \$250 million in damages to the family of a 20-year-old American student killed in a terrorist attack in Gaza in 1996. The ruling here by Judge Royce Lamberth was regarded by legal experts as unenforceable in practical terms but of potentially important symbolic value amid signs Tehran and Washington were ready to improve ties. In his ruling, Mr. Lamberth found Iran guilty of giving financial support to the Shikaki faction of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, a group blamed for an attack on a tourist bus resulting in the death of Alisa Flatow. That attack occurred on April 9, 1996.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
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King calls for development of badia through collective efforts of citizens

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein emphasised Wednesday that Jordan is determined to turn the badia region, semi-desert lands, into a productive territory through the collective efforts of the people.

Addressing a rally held at Safawi in eastern Jordan, King Hussein said he took pride in what the local tribes have done to develop their land and create life in the semi-desert area.

The King added that the government has made plans for training bedouin youths to enable them to deal with the challenges of the future and become productive citizens for their country and for their nation at large.

King Hussein said that the badia youths have exerted strenuous efforts in their research and study and their work in the development of land and they are now performing their duty for their country and people.

He said that he will spare no effort in providing support to the badia inhabitants in their endeavours to achieve progress and development.

King Hussein announced that he was donating JD100,000 to the Jordan Badia Research and Development Programme which has been undertaking the task of developing the Safawi region.



His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan attend a rally at the town of Safawi in eastern Jordan on Wednesday. Also attending are Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Lower House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Sour, and Royal Court Chief Fayez Tarawneh (Photo by Yusef Allam)

The King also directed the government to allocate JD400,000 for the same purpose. Upon his arrival at the Safawi area, King Hussein was met by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Sa'd Hayel Sour, Majara Governor Ahmad Lawzi, and other officials.

The King inspected the

various parts of the programme, and was briefed by the programme director, Mohammad Shabbaz, and by Sharifah Zein Bent Nasser, the programme's director of finance and public relations, about the objectives, plans and achievements of the programme.

King Hussein and the Crown Prince as well as the officials watched a documentary film featuring the

development of the programme in its various stages.

He also inspected the Safawi Castle, located a few metres from the Badia Research Centre, and was briefed by Sharifah Zein on its history and later met notables and bedouin chieftains.

The Jordan Badia Research and Development Programme, which was (Continued on page 7)

20 Palestinians injured in clashes with Israeli troops

Palestinians killed at checkpoint buried as Israel admits shooting them was a mistake

Combined agency dispatches

AT LEAST 20 Palestinians were wounded by Israeli gunfire Wednesday during violent protests over the mistaken killing of three Palestinian workers by soldiers at a West Bank checkpoint.

Three of the 20 Palestinian youths wounded by rubber-coated anti-riot bullets were in serious condition, officials at Hebron's Aliya hospital said.

Dozens of youths burned tires and threw stones at Israeli troops outside Dura, home to the three dead men who were due to be buried later in the day.

Dozens of other youths in nearby Hebron used stones and firebombs to attack soldiers guarding the city's Jewish settlement.

Israeli soldiers, who were out in force in expectation of violence following Tuesday night's shooting at a checkpoint near Dura, responded by firing tear gas and rubber-coated bullets. No soldiers were reported hurt.

Palestinian shops and schools were closed for a three-day general strike in the Hebron area to protest the killings and students in the city of Ramallah near Jerusalem also planned a demonstration later in the day.

Three Palestinian labourers were killed, two seriously wounded and a number of others lightly hurt when Israeli soldiers opened fire on the van carrying them through the army checkpoint on a road leading from Israel into the West Bank.



Palestinian police carry a mass funeral the flag-draped bodies of the three Palestinian labourers shot dead overnight by Israeli soldiers at a military roadblock on Wednesday. Clashes flared in the West Bank as thousands of mourners buried the men in a heroes funeral (Reuters photo)

The soldiers said the van, bringing a dozen construction workers home from day jobs in Israel, pulled out of a line of vehicles waiting to pass through the checkpoint and buffered an Israeli guard, slightly hurting him.

Believing the driver was trying to run them down in a terrorist attack, two Jewish soldiers opened fire with automatic weapons.

But General Uzi Dayan, commander of Israeli forces in the West Bank, said initial enquiries indicated the soldiers fired in error and that the driver simply lost control of his vehicle.

"This was not an attack or a

terrorist act," he said.

Gen. Dayan, who met early Wednesday with Palestinian security officials said, however, that the soldiers had followed standing orders by firing "at a car acting in a suspicious manner."

"The soldiers were not trigger happy," he said in a statement.

The two soldiers who opened fire have been detained pending the outcome of the probe.

The shooting worsened tensions already running high in the Palestinian area due to the year-long deadlock in peace negotiations with the right-wing government of Israel

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Mr. Netanyahu called Palestinian President Yasser Arafat late Tuesday to express his condolences for the shooting and promise a full probe.

Mr. Arafat condemned the shooting as "a big crime against our workers."

Mr. Arafat's chief negotiator with Israel, Saeb Erakat, sent a letter to his Israeli counterpart demanding that a joint U.S.-Israeli-Palestinian commission be formed to investigate the shooting.

The letter also demanded that Mr. Netanyahu apologise

(Continued on page 3)

Opposition blasts Cabinet for not consulting on new elections law

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Islamised opposition Wednesday blasted the government for preparing a new elections law without consulting them and said they intended to prepare their own draft legislation.

The move is likely to inflame their already tense ties with the one-year-old government of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali.

"This is further proof that the government does not intend to negotiate with anybody," said Suleiman Arar, secretary general of the pan-Arabist Al Mustaqbal Party.

Mr. Arar, a former interior minister, was commenting on Tuesday's announce-

ment by Deputy Prime Minister and Information Minister Abdullah Ensour that the government planned to submit the draft elections law to Parliament before the end of its current ordinary session on March 29.

Dr. Ensour told reporters after a regular Cabinet meeting that the draft law called for adopting magnetic identity cards as voting cards in the next general parliamentary elections set for the year 2001.

This, he said, would prevent voters from casting their ballot more than once — which was cited by the opposition as a common irregularity in the last elections.

Government officials have been tight-lipped over

other features of the draft law. But recent press reports speculated that the new legislation would divide the Kingdom into as many constituencies as the number of deputies that will be elected to ensure better representation.

The new draft law is also expected to lower the voting age to 18 from 19.

Though the two latter points have always been part of the opposition's demands under a five-year-long debate on elections regulations, most political activists said they resented the notion of imposing a "tailored" legislation on the people.

Instead, they would have

(Continued on page 7)

Vedrine insists on French role to rescue Mideast peace

RIYADH (AFP) — French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine insisted here Wednesday his country has an important role to play in rescuing the U.S.-brokered Middle East peace process.

"France, which has relations with all the parties concerned, is working for a fair and lasting peace," he told a press conference before leaving Saudi Arabia at the end of a three-day visit.

Mr. Vedrine said France, Europe and the United States were coordinating efforts "to prevent the suffocation of the peace process."

His Saudi counterpart, Prince Saud Al Faisal, warned, meanwhile, that the peace process was "in the process of dying, and if it not saved soon, it could pass away."

"All the parties are called upon to act quickly to revive the peace process" between Israel and its Arab neighbours, the prince told the newspaper Al Sharq Al Awsat.

The U.N. Security Council should act "with the same firmness" on the peace process as it did with Iraq in last month's crisis over arms inspections, Prince Saud said.

Mr. Vedrine, in an interview with the same Saudi newspaper before his visit, said the United States was not doing enough for the long-stalled initiative, and that "the role of France is essential for Europe" to play its part.

On the stagnant Israeli-Lebanese and Israeli-Syrian tracks of the peace process, the French minister reiterated at the press conference that Paris would be willing to provide security guarantees

Annan in Washington to discuss Iraq deal, discuss monies owed

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan was in Washington Wednesday to defend his deal on weapons inspections with Iraq, which has come under heavy criticism in the U.S. Congress.

The one-day visit to Washington comes amid new strains in relations between the United Nations and Washington, which still owes some \$1.7 billion to the international organisation.

Mr. Annan was not scheduled to meet with Republican leaders of Congress, who have criticised the Feb. 23 accord for being too soft on Iraq.

Mr. Annan's visit to Washington is his second as secretary general, his first coming in early 1997 following his selection as U.N. chief, the result of a long diplomatic battle.

Although the Ghanaian diplomat was considered a U.S. portage, his honeymoon with Washington appears to be over amid a stalemate between Congress and the U.S. administration over U.N. dues.

Congress is attaching conditions to payment that are dependent on certain U.N. reform "benchmarks" being carried out — a position rejected by the other 184 U.N. member states, which insist that Washington should pay up first.

Under plans initially announced by U.N. officials, some of Mr. Annan's con-

gressional critics were to be at a dinner to be hosted by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. But those plans were scrapped, and the event is now being called a working dinner with Ms. Albright, without lawmakers.

One U.N. official said the session involving members of Congress was cancelled because of a lack of time.

The subject of U.N. dues is expected to figure high on Mr. Annan's agenda, and U.N. officials acknowledge that getting congressional approval for funding will be more difficult because of criticism of the Iraq deal.

Following his agreement with Iraq, Mr. Annan stopped in Paris on the way back from Baghdad, and is expected to visit the capitals of the other U.N. Security Council permanent five members — Beijing, Moscow and London — following a Middle East tour scheduled for next week.

The Baghdad agreement provides for Iraq to open up all sites to the U.N. inspectors attempting to verify the dismantling of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

Senate majority leader Trent Lott accused Mr. Annan, who said after meeting Iraqi President Saddam Hussein that he could "do business with" him, of harming U.N. credibility by "cutting what appears to be a special deal with the most flagrant violators of United Nations resolutions."

U.N. envoy prepares for inspections of special sites

BAGHDAD (AFP) — A senior U.N. official started a mission here Wednesday to prepare the ground for the implementation of last month's accord on weapons inspections of Iraqi presidential sites.

"I am very happy to be here in the footsteps of the [U.N.] Secretary General [Kofi Annan] to ensure that the memorandum of understanding is fully implemented," Jayantha Dhanapala told Iraqi Television on his arrival.

"We have come to prepare the ground for the inspection of the eight presidential sites, which is going to be done, of course, with senior diplomats," he said.

"I hope to call on the Iraqi leadership while I am here and also make the necessary arrangements in advance of the senior diplomats' coming," said the former Sri Lankan diplomat.

The 59-year-old arms control expert heads the "special group" of U.N. weapons experts for inspections of eight presidential sites which were at the centre of a crisis between Iraq and the United Nations.

Under the Feb. 23 accord which Mr. Annan signed with Iraq opening up the

sites, the group is to carry out the inspections accompanied by diplomats, as a means of addressing Iraq's concerns over its sovereignty.

Janet Sullivan, a spokeswoman for the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) in charge of disarming Iraq, said Mr. Dhanapala was to meet Iraqi officials on Thursday and Friday.

The U.N. deputy secretary general for disarmament affairs flew in to Habbaniya airport, west of Baghdad.

UNSCOM's support base in Bahrain. He was first to meet UNSCOM personnel.

Mr. Dhanapala is due to return Saturday to New York to brief UNSCOM chairman Richard Butler on his mission.

Mr. Butler himself is due in Baghdad for talks with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz. That visit, postponed since March 2, is not expected to take place for at least another two weeks, said the spokeswoman.

The special group is expected to start its work at around the same time.

Mr. Dhanapala wrote last Friday to countries with

(Continued on page 7)

King off to Washington to 'spell out dangers of deadlock in peace process'

By Ghadeer Taher
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein leaves today on an official visit to the United States with two pressing regional crises on his agenda: the faltering peace process and the ever-volatile relations between Iraq and the United Nations Security Council.

Paving the way for the Washington trip, the King concluded a six-day Arab tour that included talks with the leaders of Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Oman, while His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan held talks Monday and Tuesday with Palestinian and Israeli leaders on deadlocked negotiations between the two sides.

The King's talks in Washington follow a string of Israeli official visits to the Kingdom including talks with Israel's National Infra-

structure Minister Ariel Sharon and Industry Minister Natan Sharansky. Iraq's Foreign Minister Mohamad Said Sahhaf, en route to meetings with the Security Council in New York, also held talks in Amman earlier this week.

Jordanian officials described the upcoming Washington talks, which will be crowned by a meeting between the King and U.S. President Bill Clinton on March 19, as crucial towards assessing the chances for a breakthrough on the Israeli-Palestinian front, and prospects for a permanent solution to the crisis between Iraq and the U.N.

A senior Jordanian official said that the King would be pressing the need for Israel to implement the next phase of redeployment in the West Bank in line with U.S. proposals put forward by Secretary of State

Madeline Albright. "His Majesty will be spelling out the dangers inherent in the continuation of the deadlock on the Palestinian front, and the crisis in Iraq," one official told the Jordan Times. "We are caught between an explosive situation to the west of the Kingdom and a volatile situation to the east," he explained.

According to the official, current Israeli policies "have turned the West Bank into a time bomb that could explode in our faces, unless a breakthrough is achieved." His Majesty had openly warned of a potential fourth Palestinian exodus to Jordan that would destabilise the Kingdom and turn it into an alternative Palestinian state.

Severe clashes erupted in Hebron Wednesday as

(Continued on page 7)

Saudi Arabia gives assurance on king's health, irritated by U.S.

RIYADH (AFP) — Saudi Arabia insisted Wednesday that King Fahd's condition in hospital was "reassuring" and denied he has undergone an operation, voicing irritation with a U.S. report on his health.

The king's health since entering hospital on Monday with inflammation of the gall bladder is "reassuring and does not require a surgical operation," the royal palace said, in a statement carried on the official news agency SPA.

The statement, along with an overnight radio update on King Fahd's condition, came shortly after a report from the U.S. State Department that

American surgeons had helped operate on the monarch.

"We understand he did have surgery and we wish him a speedy recovery," said State Department spokesman James Foley.

A State Department official said separately that he believed the surgery took place Monday, although there had not been any official U.S. contact with the Saudi government.

In Riyadh, an official source said the Saudis were "shocked" and emphatic on the point that "information on the king's health must be based on official Saudi state-

ments, and not on reports coming from Washington."

A U.S. diplomat here, meanwhile, said the State Department had apparently based its account on reports from an international news agency.

Mr. Foley's comments came after SPA reported that King Fahd sent thanks to numerous Arab and other leaders who had sent him get-well messages, including U.S. President Bill Clinton.

The king is undergoing tests, according to SPA, while a medical source said here that his condition was "not serious" and the monarch could soon be discharged from the

King Faisal hospital in Riyadh.

Inflammation of the gall bladder could be caused by a simple infection, but it could also be linked to cancer of the pancreas, medical sources said.

Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz has also told a string of foreign leaders who inquired about his half-brother that the king was in good health, SPA reported on Tuesday.

King Fahd, who is in his mid-70s, was hospitalised in November 1995 after suffering a stroke and called on the crown prince to run the affairs of state for six weeks.

Turkish court acquits policemen charged with torturing teenagers

ISTANBUL (AFP) — A Turkish court Wednesday acquitted ten policemen charged with torturing a group of high school students, the Anatolia news agency reported.

The criminal court in the western Turkish town of Manisa ruled unanimously that there was insufficient evidence for the accusations against the policemen.

The case has become a symbol for human rights violations in Turkey.

The Turkish Court of Appeals in January overturned the students' conviction for membership in an out-

lawed left-wing group. It cited a sloppy investigation.

The students, aged 14 to 19 years at the time of their arrest in December 1995, had been sentenced to prison terms of up to twelve and a half years by a State Security Court following their arrest for allegedly writing leftist slogans on traffic signs and similar misdemeanours.

They had argued in court that their confessions were extracted under torture, a claim that was supported by hospital records.

A public outcry and pressure from human rights groups and the students' families triggered

the trial of the policemen.

But the trial dragged on for years, with the defendants failing to show up time after time.

In a surprising reversal in February, the prosecutor dropped his original demand for prison sentences adding up to 700 years for the ten officers and asked for acquittal of several defendants and a total of 39 months in prison for the rest instead.

The students' lawyer, Sabri Ergul, expressed outrage at the acquittal of the policemen.

"The court's false decision will be overturned by the Court of Appeals," he said.

Jewish militants issue pamphlet glorifying Goldstein

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Jewish militants have distributed pamphlets glorifying Baruch Goldstein, the Jewish settler who killed 29 Palestinians in a Hebron mosque four years ago, Israel radio reported Wednesday.

The pamphlet, titled "Baruch the Saviour and Liberator," was issued to mark the fourth anniversary of the Hebron massacre, which took place on Feb. 25, 1994.

Israel public radio said the booklet was distributed in Jerusalem and Jewish settlements on the West Bank and was meant to be a response to moves in parliament to move Goldstein's grave.

The grave, surrounded by a large park, is currently in the settlement of Kiryat Arba outside Hebron and has become a pilgrimage site for Jewish extremists opposed to peace agreements with the Palestinians.

Several members of parliament have submitted bills calling for the grave to be moved out of Kiryat Arba.



PROTEST AGAINST KILLINGS: A slingshot-wielding Palestinian hurls a stone Wednesday at Israeli troops during a protest against the killing of three labourers at an army checkpoint. Soldiers responded with rubber-coated bullets. The army at first said the labourers' vehicle, which hit and injured a soldier, had run the roadblock in a surprise attack but Israel's West Bank commander said later it appeared there had been no violent intent (Reuters photo).

Israeli army says no Lebanon pullout possible without Syrian agreement

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's top military brass told Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Wednesday that it would be impossible to safely withdraw Israeli troops from the buffer zone they occupy in south Lebanon without Syria's agreement, Israel public radio reported.

The generals told a meeting of Mr. Netanyahu's inner security cabinet that his recent offer to pull out of south Lebanon in exchange for

security guarantees from only the Lebanese government could not work, the radio said, citing sources present at the discussion.

Some ministers insisted the government should pursue the "Lebanon alone" initiative and the group was due to continue the debate at next Wednesday's weekly meeting of the security group, the radio said.

Mr. Netanyahu raised the idea last week of an Israeli

withdrawal from south Lebanon in exchange for a Lebanese agreement to take control of the area and prevent attacks by Islamist and other guerrillas on northern Israel.

In the past Israel has offered to quit the 15-kilometre wide buffer zone in exchange for security guarantees from both Lebanon and its Syrian patron, which has some 30,000 troops inside the neighbouring country. Syria refuses to make any

deals with Israel unless the Jewish state returns the Golan Heights it occupied in 1967 and illegally annexed in 1981.

Syrian and Lebanese leaders have both rebuffed the latest Israeli initiative. Most Israeli military chiefs and many government officials believe Syria promotes attacks on Israeli forces in south Lebanon, notably by the Hizbollah, to pressure the Jewish state to withdraw from the Golan Heights.

Turkish army begins offensive against Kurdish rebels

DIYARBAKIR (AFP) — Turkish troops launched a major offensive overnight Tuesday against Kurdish separatists in southeastern Sirnak province, bordering Syria and Iraq, military officials said.

The military regularly launches assaults against the outlawed Kurdish Labour

Party (PKK) at this time of year, hoping to prevent the rebels regrouping after the harsh winter.

Military officials here said the offensive was focused on Mount Cudi in the region of Besta, close to the Iraqi border.

While declining to specify

the number of troops involved, the sources said they were backed up by planes and helicopter gunships.

Mount Cudi is a main route for Kurdish rebels crossing into Turkey from northern Iraq, where they maintain their permanent bases.

13 Islamists killed by Algerian security — press

ALGIERS (AFP) — Up to 13 armed Islamists have been killed by security forces in the eastern Algerian region of Tizi Ouzou and the southwest region of Ain Temouchent, newspapers reported Wednesday.

Le Soir d'Algerie said 10 Islamists were killed Monday and Tuesday, during a security operation in the Sidi Ali Bouachra area near Tizi Ouzou.

Returning from the operation, security forces fired "victory salvos" in the air, the daily reported.

French reports said two Islamists had been killed by

security forces in the forest. Another three Islamists were killed on Tuesday in Ain Temouchent as part of the army's continuing offensive against rebels in the western part of the country.

Conflicting tolls have put the number of Islamists killed since the offensive began two weeks ago at between 24 and 150.

Another newspaper, Liberte, said one person was killed and another kidnapped overnight by an armed group in the western region of Tlemcen.

Meanwhile, the criminal court in Algiers on Tuesday

sentenced Anwar Haddam, a leader of the banned Islamic Salvation Front party, based overseas, to death in absentia for his alleged role in the killing of intellectuals and journalists.

Haddam, in custody in the United States, was sentenced to death several months ago for his role in an arms trafficking network.

The court on Tuesday sentenced in absentia 16 other Islamists also charged with murder.

Another court in Tizi Ouzou handed down similar sentences Tuesday against eight Islamists.

Lebanon truce committee meets on complaints from both sides

NAQURA (AFP) — The international committee monitoring the ceasefire in south Lebanon met Wednesday to examine complaints from both Israel and Lebanon about attacks last week.

Israel has protested about the wounding of a woman in a village in the central sector of the Israeli-occupied zone in south Lebanon,

and about mortar fire which damaged several houses in Jezzine, an area controlled by the Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia to the north of the zone.

Its third complaint is against anti-aircraft fire against Israeli jets by Hizbollah guerrillas, the first time such a protest has been lodged with the committee.

Lebanon has filed protests about an Israeli bombardment on a village in the Bekaa valley in which a four-year-old child was injured, and mortar fire which damaged several houses in a village outside Israel's self-declared "security zone."

The international committee monitoring the April 1996 cease-

fire agreement is composed of representatives from France, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, and the United States.

Under the terms of the accord, Israel and the Shiite Hezbollah militia agreed to avoid attacking civilians on either side of the border or launch attacks from civilian-inhabited areas.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

Thursday Programmes

14:10 ...Cartoon — The Dinky D's
14:30 ...D.C. — The Animal Show
15:00 ...French Programmes
17:00 ...NBA
18:00 ...Drama — The Battered Bridge
19:00 ...Le Journal
19:15 ...French Programme
19:30 ...News Headlines
19:35 ...Comedy — Big Brother Jake
20:00 ...Drama — The Great Romances
20:30 ...Drama — Dr. Quinn, the Medicine Woman
21:10 ...The Oprah Winfrey Show
22:00 ...News in English
22:25 ...Feature film — "Flash Fire"
22:59 ...Comedy — Never The Twain
00:30 ...End of T.X.

Friday Programmes

14:10 ...Cartoon — The Adventures of Tadeo Rappin
14:30 ...Wishbone
15:00 ...French Programmes
17:00 ...He Shows, He Serves
17:30 ...D.C. — Blue Water Dreaming
18:30 ...Tarzan
19:00 ...Le Journal
19:15 ...Educational Programme — All in the Family
19:30 ...News Headlines
19:35 ...Friends
20:00 ...Documentary — Life on the Internet
20:30 ...The American Chart Show

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

21:10 The Adventures of Brisco County
22:00 ...News in English
22:30 ...Mini-series: Game on the Night (Pt. 1)
00:30 ...End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:30 ...Fair
05:47 ...Sunrise
11:45 ...Dhuhr
15:08 ...Asr
17:44 ...Maghreb
19:01 ...Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweithel, Tel. 5927540
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4622785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624591
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622596
Anglican Church Tel. 4624533/4624511
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751
Amman International Church Tel. 565897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5668294
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 711295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4634932
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Temperatures are expected to drop significantly, skies partly cloudy, winds westerly moderate to active, with a chance of scattered showers particularly in the northern parts of the Kingdom. On Friday, temperatures are expected to rise gradually. In Amman, it will be dry, warm, winds southerly moderate to active, and seas choppy.

Amman ...08/18
Deserts ...12/25
Jordan Valley ...12/24

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 23, Aqaba 28 Humidity readings: Amman 17 per cent, Aqaba 18 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Fayed Dabbas ...759155
Dr. Fakher Rubeisi ...552233
Dr. Adnan Zaghal ...98121
Dr. Mazen Nabil ...63045
Firas pharmacy ...5661912
Ferdous pharmacy ...778356
Al Asema pharmacy ...4637055
Nairookh pharmacy ...4625672
Al Salam pharmacy ...4636730
Yacoub pharmacy ...4644945
Shmeisani pharmacy ...4657060
Najih pharmacy ...847632
IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Balde ...728770
Al Quds pharmacy ...1-1
ZARQA:
Dr. Zahour Al Qadi ...906610
Khalifeh pharmacy ...985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre ...4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue ...4630341
Civil Defence Emergency ...199
Rescue Police 192 4621111, 4637777
Fire Brigade ...4671001
Blood Bank ...775121

Highway Police ...843402
Traffic Police ...806390
Public Security Dept. ...4630321
Hotel Complaints ...5605800
Price Complaints ...5661176
Water & Sewerage Company 597267
Amman Municipality Complaints ...757111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) ...121
Overseas Calls ...010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs ...4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs ...5661101
Jordan Television ...773111
Radio Jordan ...774111
Water Authority ...5630100
J. Electricity Authority ...815615
Electric Power Co. ...4636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53300
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-53300

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5621199
The Marine, Adli ...56661317
Hossein Medical Centre Tel. 836813, 859656
Luzulu ...4630198
Khalidi Maternity ...46428176
Akileh Maternity ...464244172
Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362
Mulhas, J. Amman ...4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani ...4607071
Shmeisani Hospital ...5669131
University Hospital ...4834545
Al-Munasher Hospital 56672279
Al-Ahli, Abdali ...56641646

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir ...775111/26
Army, Marka ...891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 5602240/50
Amal Hospital ...5674155

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital ...09983323
Zarqa National Hospital ...099800560
Ibn Sina Hospital ...09986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital ...09980990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital ...021275555
Greek Catholic Hospital ...021272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital ...021247100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital 03514111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. 44153200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights are supplied on phone 44 (52700) or 44 (53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:15 ...Sanan (RJ)
08:45 ...Bombay (RJ)
09:15 ...Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:15 ...Beirut (RJ)
09:45 ...New Delhi (RJ)
10:05 ...Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:15 ...Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:50 ...Colombo (RJ)
18:05 ...Kuwait (RJ)
18:30 ...London, Athens (RJ)
19:30 ...Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (RJ)
19:30 ...Moscow (RJ)
19:50 ...Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)
22:30 ...Brussels (add) (RJ)
00:25 ...Lamaca (RJ)
01:45 ...Jeddah (add) (RJ)
05:30 ...Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights
13:15 ...Riyadh (SV)
14:10 ...Shurayh (AH)
15:00 ...Doha (QR)
15:20 ...Muscat, Doha (GF)
16:00 ...Dubai (EK)
16:30 ...Rome (AZ)
20:00 ...Tel Aviv (MS)
20:10 ...Beirut (ME)
20:40 ...Cairo (MS)
23:10 ...Istanbul (TK)
23:10 ...London, Beirut (BA)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:00 ...Beirut (RJ)
10:00 ...Moscow (RJ)
11:00 ...Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
11:00 ...Athens, Brussels (add) (RJ)
11:00 ...Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (RJ)
11:30 ...Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
12:05 ...Kuwait (RJ)
12:10 ...Paris (RJ)
12:15 ...London (RJ)
20:10 ...Cairo (RJ)
20:30 ...Jeddah (RJ)
20:45 ...Jeddah (add) (RJ)
21:10 ...Lamaca (RJ)
23:00 ...Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)
00:30 ...Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights
00:35 ...Amsterdam (KL)
03:00 ...Athens (OA)
06:40 ...Beirut, London (BA)
08:00 ...Beirut (ME)
11:20 ...London (BA)
14:45 ...Riyadh (SV)
15:00 ...Algiers (AH)
15:55 ...Rome (AZ)
16:20 ...Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
17:00 ...Muscat, Dubai (EK)
17:30 ...Rome (AZ)
21:20 ...Tel Aviv (LY)
21:40 ...Cairo (MS)
08:00 ...Beirut (ME)

Royal Wings
(For Thursday and Friday)
07:45 ...Amman (QAIA) (RW)
09:05 ...Amman (QAIA) (RW)
09:50 ...Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:20 ...Tel Aviv (RW)
18:30 ...Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:20 ...Amman (QAIA) (RW)
22:50 ...Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

King, Queen receive Torch of Liberty Award

AMMAN (J.T.) — Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor Wednesday received the "Torch of Liberty Award" from the Volunteers of America organisation "in recognition of their efforts in the fields of human rights, peace and democracy," according to a press release.

According to the president of the organisation, Mark Cosman, this award, which has only been presented once before to a foreign dignitary in its one hundred year history, aims to change the "negative portrayal of the Muslim World in the Western media through King Hussein and Queen Noor."

The Volunteers of America is a non-profit, non-governmental human services organisation that began serving people in need in 1896.

Its programmes, which extend throughout the United States, have expanded to include China and Russia. The organisation will be spending over \$350 million in providing humanitarian services to people in need, the statement concluded.



PRINCESS BASMA OPENS CEREMONY: HRH Princess Basma on Wednesday opens the "Ceremony Celebrating International Women's Day," which was organised by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). UNDP Resident Representative Jorgen Lissner and UNIFEM Regional Advisor Haifa Ghazaleh also spoke to mark the occasion.

Emoush announces restructuring plan for ministry, civil service reforms

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Administrative Development Bassam Emoush announced Wednesday that his ministry has begun a restructuring programme and has prepared plans to upgrade the skills of public sector employees.

The ministry is also seeking to expand consultations and cooperation with its counterparts in other Arab states to gain more expertise in public administrative reform and civil servant training, Dr. Emoush said.

Another component of the ministry's plan involves phasing out building rentals as a cost-cutting measure, he added.

Referring to the present civil service system, Dr. Emoush said that while it has many advantages, the government introduces amendments from time to time in response to developments and public administration needs.

For example, he said, under the present system government employees can be seconded to work in other

Arab countries for a 10-year period. This arrangement helps the government deal with the country's unemployment problem, he added.

Recent amendments to the civil service system benefit women employees, since they are now entitled to request unpaid leaves while retain the right to return to work, according to Dr. Emoush.

Before the recent amendments, government employees used to be automatically promoted based on the number of years in service, he said. Now, promotions depends on a worker's competence and skill rather than years in service, the minister added.

Dr. Emoush explained that annual reports previously filed by department heads on worker performance were always returned with excellent marks. Under the new system, directors must prepare confidential reports, with incompetent workers receiving warnings.

He said that in this way, the government aims to redress

points of weakness and incompetence in the public administration system.

With regard to retirement, Dr. Emoush said there was no plan to retire employees en masse in the course of carrying out administrative reforms, but rather employees are retired when they reach the set age.

However, he said some employees may lose their jobs when a public institution is privatised, because the private organisation which takes over cannot afford to keep a large number of employees on its payroll. He said this question is being examined by the government, and proposals on dealing with a redundant number of employees will be submitted to Parliament for debate before the current session ends.

Dr. Emoush said there were no plans at present to increase the salaries of civil servants but he added that he was in favour of introducing a system whereby the salaries are linked to the cost of living index.

Israeli press highlights Prince Hassan's emphasis on humanitarian aspects of peace

AMMAN (J.T.) — The remarks that His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan made during his visit to Israel Tuesday, particularly his emphasis on the need to build peace with a human face, were widely covered in the Israeli press, which described Prince Hassan's "penetrating remarks" as the highlight of the visit.

Israeli sources stressed the relevance of Prince Hassan's

emphasis on the humanitarian dimension of peace making, with Israeli newspapers stressing the Crown Prince's call to "look ahead rather than looking behind."

The speech of the Crown Prince and his urgings to overcome the fear of peace were the highlight of the visit, wrote Yediot Ahronot, which noted Prince Hassan's reference to the renowned Israeli peace activist and writer Amos Oz.

"The speech was enlightening and witty," said the largely circulated Ma'ariv newspaper, which referred to Prince Hassan's quotation of phrases from the Bible urging justice, peace and respect for the rights of others.

Ha'aretz newspaper said Prince Hassan showed "impressive erudition" when he referred to the work of Mr. Oz, describing the Crown Prince's call for

ensuring that peace in the region is peace for the people as a "penetrating remark."

The newspaper noted that the standing ovation Prince Hassan received from the audience, which included politicians, academicians, parliamentarians and businessmen as well as journalists, was exceptional in Israel.

The Israeli press also highlighted Prince Hassan's

reiteration of the unwavering commitment to peace as a right of all peoples of the area that all parties must respect.

In his speech, Prince Hassan said the peace which Jordan seeks is a peace that ensures justice, the fulfillment of the rights of all peoples of the area, mutual respect and joint work to bring about security, stability and development to the region.

U.S. provides Jordan with \$15 million in loans

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan and the U.S. Wednesday signed an agreement providing \$15 million in U.S. government soft loans to help Jordan purchase about 100,000 metric tonnes of wheat from private U.S. sources, according to an American embassy press release.

The agreement was signed at the Ministry of Finance by Minister of Finance Suleiman Hafez and U.S. Ambassador to Jordan Wesley W. Egan.

The loan is being provided by the United States Department of Agriculture under the provisions of Public Law 480 (PL 480), the statement said.

It is being extended at the concessional interest rate of four per cent per year. Repayment will begin following a grace period of three years in 18 annual instalments.

Since 1990, the United States has provided \$137 million in soft loans to Jordan under the PL 480 programme, the announcement said.

Following the signing of the agreement, Mr. Hafez praised U.S.-Jordanian relations, saying that the strong ties were reflected in the volume of U.S. grants and soft loans to the Kingdom, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The minister noted that the U.S. administration wrote off around \$711 million, or about 76 per cent, of Jordan's total debts in 1994.

The remaining Jordanian debt to the U.S. now stands at \$400 million, added the minister.

Prime minister asks for international efforts to lift U.N. embargo on Libya

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Wednesday asked that efforts be made by the world community and Arab states to lift the sanctions imposed on Libya so that the Libyan people may resume contributing to joint Arab action.

The prime minister was speaking at a meeting with visiting Libyan Minister of Health and Social Security Affairs Suleiman Ghammari.

The two sides reviewed the level of cooperation and coordination between Jordan and Libya, and Dr. Majali was briefed on the talks held

Tuesday and Wednesday between ministers of the two countries, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Dr. Majali praised the present level of cooperation between the two countries and called for further efforts to strengthen ties.

After the meeting, which was also attended by Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Hani Mulki, Mr. Ghammari said Libya and Jordan maintain strong ties and are seeking integration rather than cooperation.

He said the Jordanian-Libyan Higher Joint Com-

mittee is expected to convene in May to discuss joint projects and further cooperation in trade, investments, and pharmaceuticals.

Earlier, Mr. Ghammari, Dr. Mulki and their respective delegations resumed talks "which started Tuesday."

According to Petra, the two sides will sign an executive programme Thursday for cooperation in information, culture, and youth fields for the years 1999-2001. They will also sign two other agreements on encouraging and protecting investments and organising land trans-

port. At the conclusion of Wednesday's meeting, the two sides announced that they would sign the minutes of their deliberations on Thursday and finalise the agenda for the May meeting of the higher joint committee.

Also Wednesday, the Libyan delegation visited Al Bashir Hospital and were briefed by Director Mahmoud Awad on the hospital's services to the public. Dr. Awad said several patients from Libya are among the Arab nationals receiving treatment at the hospital.

Japan extends \$11.7 million in grants for medical, fire-fighting service improvements

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government of Japan has provided grants to Jordan University Hospital (JUH) and the Civil Defence sector totalling \$11.7 million to improve their respective medical and fire-fighting services, according to a Japanese embassy press release.

The first grant of \$6.4 million will help JUH upgrade its medical equipment and improve relevant services. The second grant, amounting to \$5.3 million is for the improvement of the capacity of fire-fighting services in the Kingdom.

The agreements were signed Wednesday by Min-

ister of Planning Rima Huneidi and Koichi Matsumoto, ambassador of Japan to Jordan.

The JUH grant will finance the purchase of more than 100 types of medical equipment, foremost among them an ultrasound machine, a coagulometer, an evoked potential machine and a CT-scan, while the second grant will finance the purchase of urgently-needed fire-fighting equipment, including fire engines, rapid intervention vehicles (RIVs), water tankers and ambulances, the statement said.

The donated fire-fighting equipment will be stationed

not only at Amman's fire stations, but also at stations in the governorates of Madaba, Zarqa and Balqa.

In remarks after the signing ceremony, Mr. Matsumoto said: "The objective of the Jordan University Hospital grant is not limited to the fulfilment of its function as the key referral facility, but also aims at improving the level of clinical education and training at the hospital."

"We believe that this project is well-planned in order to achieve the cherished health and medical objectives as well as those in the field of higher education. This would in turn reflect positively on medical

services and be beneficial to the whole population."

Commenting on the second grant, Mr. Matsumoto said: "Japan is pleased to provide such a contribution to the civil defence sector in Jordan, which is certain to utilise the provided equipment to improve the Kingdom's fire-fighting capacity and ability to combat the increasing number of fires and ensuing disasters."

Since the beginning of the 1997 fiscal year (last April), Japan has extended grant aid totalling about \$14.3 million to Jordan, including these two projects, the statement concluded.

Iraq situation focus of political meeting's opening session

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A two-day meeting to discuss political problems facing the region, especially the Iraq-U.S. situation, opened Wednesday with the participation of nine Arab states.

"Recent developments in the Middle East have shown that the region is being targeted by its enemies," said Murad Ghali, head of the Cairo-based Arab Peace and Solidarity Organisation, at the opening session.

The delegates, who arrived here Tuesday, represent Libya, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, and Sudan in addition to Jordan.

"The Arab region is facing a

deconstruction programme that is aimed at turning its states into small entities representing tribes and religions," said Mr. Murad, a former foreign minister of Egypt.

Mr. Murad said that despite the recent agreement between Iraq and the U.N., which ended a deadlock over arms inspections in Iraq, the U.S. is continuing its threats against Baghdad.

He called for the Arab public to mobilise public opinion to face the American threats and put an end to the "dual containment" policy of Washington.

Issa Mdanat, head of Jordan's chapter of the organisation, called for an Arab summit to discuss the Iraq-U.S. situation.

Mr. Mdanat said the agree-

ment on Feb. 26 between the U.N. and Baghdad was "an example of the role that could be played by the world body to solve regional issues."

"The failure of the U.S. to launch a military strike against Iraq did not put an end to its appetite for aggression," Mr. Mdanat, a veteran leftist leader, said.

He called for reactivating the role of the organisation in the Arab World "to mobilise public opinion against all the challenges facing the region."

He said that among the issues that would be debated by the participants is a conference of Arab non-governmental organisations "as part of the effort to mobilise public opinion."

Mr. Murad said some of the

problems that the meeting would discuss are "black terrorism" in Egypt and Algeria, means of resuming peace talks in the region to "ensure Israel's compliance with U.N. resolutions," and Turkey's water dispute with Syria and Iraq.

"Turkey is the fountain of water in the region but its water policy is against the interests of Iraq and Syria," Mr. Murad added.

He was referring to Ankara's proposed water projects on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which Baghdad and Damascus view as endangering their water shares from the two rivers.

Among other issues on the agenda are the U.S.-spearheaded sanctions against Libya and Sudan.

what's going on

FILMS

* "Doorman For Everything" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.
* "From Raphael to Caravaggio: The Renaissance 1500-1600" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, on Thursday at 5:30 p.m. (Presented and commented on by Dr. Mazen Asfour).
* "Out of Africa" at the American Center, Abdoun on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

LA FRANCOPHONIE WEEK

* Lecture: "Francophonie: Language des Aures" by Lebanese poet Salah Stétié at the City Hall, Ras Al 'Ain on Saturday, March 14 at 6:30 p.m.

BASKETBALL GAMES

* Basketball games of the Jordan Baseball League are scheduled to continue on Friday March 13 and Friday March 20 (10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.) at

Terra Sancta High School, Jabal Weibdeh for ages 5-15 during which registration for the baseball spring season, that will start at the end of March, is to take place.

EXHIBITION

* Paintings by Saleh Abu Shindi at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until March 19.
* Works by Sana Kayyali at Orient Gallery, Sbmeisani (Tel. 5681303/4), until March 26. (Proceeds will go to Al Quds Al Sharif Defending Association).
* "The Spanish Contemporary Graphic Art" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman (Tel. 610858), until March 20.
* Works by Jordanian artist Yousef Baddawi at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until April 9 (Tel. 4643251/2). Also displaying a private collection of Mamdouh Bisharat entitled "A Vision, An Identity" and works by contemporary Arab artists — "The New Collection."

Students' hunger strike ends due to health problems

By Hasher Majoka
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A hunger strike by three University of Jordan students to protest disciplinary probation ended earlier this week after six days due to the deteriorating health of one of their members.

Hamza Hasanat, a student at the Faculty of Science, told the Jordan Times that he suffers from a serious heart condition and had gone on the hunger strike "against my doctor's advice."

"I lost six kilograms in five days and began experiencing increased heart palpitations," he said. At this point, he and his colleagues, Abdul Rahman Matar and Ehab As'ad, decided to call off the hunger strike, he added.

All three students, members of the Islamist-dominated Faculty of Science Student Council, were protesting an administrative decision to place them on disciplinary probation for screening a video on the life of a Hamas member.

Under the terms of his probation, Mr. Matar, the head of the outgoing council, is barred from running in the upcoming elections.

"Even though the administra-

tion did not lift the sanctions, we were partially successful in our aims by raising the awareness of our plight among the student body and sending a strong message to the administration," Mr. Matar told the Jordan Times.

"Many students came forward and identified with our cause, while all of the 80-strong University Student Council stood by us during this period," he added.

Meanwhile, preparations are under way for the next University Student Council elections, scheduled for March 23, even though campaigning does not officially start until March 16.

The elections will be the first to be held under the recently enacted "one person, one vote system" which, according to Islamist student leaders, is designed to break their hold on the council.

Islamists controlled 71 out of 80 seats in the outgoing student council.

Many Islamist student activists privately admit that after the elections they will not control more than 50 to 55 seats on the council. "We will definitely have a majority this time too, but it will be a far cry from our thorough domination in the past," an Islamist activist who declined to be named told the Jordan Times.

personally to the families of the victims. "Since he is fully and directly responsible for this crime."

The employer of three Palestinian workers urged Mr. Netanyahu on Wednesday to visit the bereaved families.

"This is a huge tragedy, not some insignificant thing. I ask that the Israeli government, the Israeli prime minister behave as King Hussein did — the way he came to visit the families," Salam Sharacha told Israel Radio.

Mr. Sharacha was referring to the visit by King Hussein to Israeli families of seven girls shot dead by a Jordanian soldier while they were on a school trip a year ago at the Israeli-Jordanian border.

Thousands of Palestinians, including a host of senior Palestinian National Authority officials, attended a mass funeral procession Wednesday for the three

dead men.

The bodies of the three men were carried to their home town of Dura in three large vans decorated with wreaths of flowers and accompanied by a huge convoy of Palestinian police vehicles, ambulances and private cars.

In a hushed silence, around 5,000 people lined the main street of Dura or watched from rooftops as the procession entered the town located near Hebron in the southern West Bank. The bodies had earlier undergone autopsies in Bethlehem.

The funeral cortege was preceded by a procession of about 30 cars and jeeps from the Palestinian police and West Bank preventive security force whose chief, Jibril Rajub, is from Dura and lost a nephew in Tuesday's shooting.

About 25 youths, their faces masked in the traditional Palestinian chequered headscarf, accompanied the procession waving Palestinian flags while a number

of other youths in the crowd waved the green banner of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas).

Someone also carried a large Israeli flag while the crowd chanted "With our souls and with our blood we will avenge the martyrs."

A banner signed by the Islamic Group read: "The blood of innocents will continue to be shed as long as there is occupation, but the blood of martyrs will not be shed in vain."

Col. Rajub headed the large number of Palestinian security officers and other officials at the event alongside Hebron police chief Tareq Zaid.

Col. Rajub's brother Nayef, a cleric linked to Hamas and Dura's imam, was due to read the funeral prayer.

The three victims were Ghaleb Rajub, 36, a father of five, the van's driver Sharawi Junied, 27, and Adnan Abu Snejd, 33, a father of nine including a baby

son born last week.

Meanwhile, a Jewish settler shot and wounded a Palestinian stone-thrower Wednesday during protests over the killing of three Palestinian labourers by Israeli troops the previous day, witnesses said.

The settler fired from his car at a group of Palestinian students throwing stones at vehicles on a road leading to a Jewish settlement north of West Bank city of Ramallah.

One student was shot in the leg, the witnesses said.

About 200 students from Bir Zeit university north of Ramallah marched to an intersection near the settlement of Beit El to protest Tuesday night's shooting of the three Palestinian workers in the southern West Bank.

The protesters clashed briefly with Israeli soldiers dispatched to the intersection but the troops, aided by Palestinian police, quickly dispersed the demonstration.

Ethnic Albanian leader says independence is minimum for Kosovo

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AFP) — Kosovo Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova rejected Wednesday any solution for Kosovo that falls short of independence for the troubled southern Serbian province.

"A political solution within Yugoslavia is not a solution," Mr. Rugova told reporters here, adding, "Autonomy would only be a source of new conflicts."

"We have not asked to change Kosovo's borders. We consider that the best political solution for Kosovo is granting its independence," he said.

Mr. Rugova spoke after other Albanian leaders rejected a call from Belgrade for dialogue following two bloody police sweeps by Serbian security units on suspected Albanian separatists in the province that has left at least 77 dead since the start of the month.

The Serbian government made its appeal Tuesday, a day after the international Contact Group threatened a raft of sanctions unless Belgrade ended its crackdown and opened dialogue with the Albanians.

It said that talks were "the only way for developing

political processes aimed at solving" the crisis in the province. However it continued to reject Albanian calls for independence for Kosovo whose autonomy was abolished by Belgrade in 1989.

Ferit Agani, a senior member of Mr. Rugova's Kosovo Democratic League (LDK), commenting on the call, told Belgrade's radio B92: "It is not at all serious, (it is) even arrogant, to give blessing to the Drenica crime and allegedly call on Albanians for a dialogue in the same statement."

Mr. Agani was referring to the Kosovo region where the Serbian security action took place, an area Belgrade

says was the centre of an Albanian terrorist group.

Other voices in the Albanian community however were even more dismissive of Belgrade's offer.

Adem Demaci, Mr. Rugova's chief political rival, who heads the radical Kosovo Parliamentary Party (KPP), rejected as "hypocrisy" the call from Belgrade.

Mr. Demaci told AFP that Albanians "cannot discuss normally under these conditions, under this reign of terror with a knife at our throat. This Serb proposal is pure hypocrisy."

The KPP leader said that "the Albanians have favoured dialogue, but the

Serb regime has instead only offered terror, insisting on conditions like the acceptance of the Serbian Constitution.

"Only the weak and the cowardly" would accept such a proposal, Mr. Demaci said, adding: "If I were Rugova I would demand that the situation in the province be restored to normal first before agreeing to talk."

Mr. Rugova, a cerebral university professor, has spearheaded the LDK's peaceful resistance campaign in Kosovo that had until recently avoided the bloodshed witnessed in Bosnia and Croatia. In his statement to reporters, Mr.

Rugova said Albanians "are for unconditional and mediated dialogue" with Belgrade, but repeated a longstanding position that any talks take place under international mediation.

The Kosovo Albanian leader also said that the international community should put the province "under international protection as a provisional solution."

Also Wednesday, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe urged Belgrade to halt excessive use of force in Kosovo, and to vigorously investigate and accept international investigation of reported summary executions and to bring to justice those found responsible.

Witnesses to the latest police action in Drenica which began last Thursday said that nearly half of those killed were women, children or the elderly and that some men were shot in front of their families.

In addition it called on Yugoslavia to agree to a mission by former Spanish Premier Felipe Gonzalez and to "initiate a meaningful dialogue" with representatives of Kosovo Albanians.

EU special envoy arrives in Tirana

TIRANA (AFP) — Tony Lloyd, British minister of state, arrived in Tirana Wednesday as special envoy of the European Union, in an attempt to resolve the violence in Serbia's embattled Kosovo province.

After talks with Albanian leaders, Mr. Lloyd was to travel to Skopje and Belgrade, but had no plans to go to Kosovo, the British Foreign Office said.

In Belgrade, Mr. Lloyd meets late Wednesday with Yugoslav Foreign Minister Zivadin Jovanovic, while a meeting with

President Slobodan Milosevic had not been confirmed, embassy officials told AFP.

Mr. Lloyd hopes to meet Mr. Milosevic and advise him of sanctions moves in decided in London Monday by the six-nation Contact Group on the former Yugoslavia, the Foreign Office said.

The group — Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the United States — is asking the U.N. Security Council for an arms embargo on the Milosevic regime because of its repression of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.

Opposition has slight lead in polls as Danes vote

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — Some four million Danes began voting Wednesday in legislative elections that looked set to be close-run, with opinion polls giving the opposition a slight lead over Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen's Social Democratic-led government.

Mr. Rasmussen, in power since 1993 with the radicals and the support of the far left, is being challenged by the Liberals and Conservatives, spearheaded by Liberal leader and former Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen.

An Observa poll in the daily B.T., which questioned 952 people Tuesday evening, indicated that the "bourgeois" (non-Socialist) bloc would win 90 of 179 seats in parliament.

The Social Democrats, radicals and the extreme left would receive 85, according to the poll.

This is the first time a poll has indicated that only five mandates separate the two blocs, according to Observa. Only 20,000 votes separate the two.

Four seats reserved for Denmark's territories of Greenland and the Faeroe Islands are not included in Wednesday's poll.

Mr. Rasmussen, who handed out roses to passers-by in

Copenhagen's downtown centre in a last campaign swing Tuesday evening, said he was "counting on the undecideds", estimated at 250,000-350,000.

"They will determine the result, they are numerous", he said.

Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, often perceived as arrogant and provocative, remained cautious in his remarks. He said he would not believe a bourgeois victory before seeing it "in black and white."

Voters will elect 179 members to the Folketing, the single-chamber parliament. There are 1,127 candidates from 11 parties running, including 311 women.

Danes began casting their ballots at 9:00 a.m. 10:00 GMT in cloudy, chilly weather, in a vote called seven months early by Mr. Rasmussen thanks to his

smaller political parties, such as the Centre Democrats and the Danish People's Party, with about four and eight percent respectively of voter support in opinion polls, could play a decisive role if the results are close.

Polls will remain open until 8:00 p.m. Voter turnout is expected to be strong. In the last election in 1994, 84.3 percent of eligible voters cast ballots.

major theme of the brief election campaign.

The opposition has also promised to reduce taxes by some 22 billion kroner (\$3.14 billion) — a popular move in a country that has the highest taxes in the world.

With a strong economy, debate has focused on problems of everyday life, such as hospital queues and waiting lists, lack of child day-care places and the quality of education.

European policy has also played a role, as Danes will vote on the Amsterdam Treaty in a May 28 referendum.

While opinion polls have indicated that a slim majority would like to see a bourgeois government, surveys also show that most Danes would prefer to see Mr. Rasmussen remain in power over Mr. Ellemann-Jensen.

Some of the country's smaller political parties, such as the Centre Democrats and the Danish People's Party, with about four and eight percent respectively of voter support in opinion polls, could play a decisive role if the results are close.

Polls will remain open until 8:00 p.m. Voter turnout is expected to be strong. In the last election in 1994, 84.3 percent of eligible voters cast ballots.

Shell blast in Congo's capital kills 11 children

KINSHASA (AFP) — Eleven children died when a shell they were playing with in a house being built in Congo's capital Brazzaville exploded, a radio station reported Wednesday.

The blast Tuesday night killed six children instantly and five subsequently died of their injuries in hospital, said Radio Liberte, monitored in Kinshasa across the River Congo.

The radio earlier reported that eight youngsters had died and others were wounded. It later quoted a witness who described appalling wounds sustained by the victims when the shell blew up in the northern Ouenze district.

The accident was the first time children had been killed by a shell in Brazzaville, which bore the brunt of a civil war last year, when former military ruler Denis Sassou Nguesso defeated his successor Pascal Lissouba, though six youths were badly hurt playing with grenades in January.

On President Sassou Nguesso's orders, Congolese police have already begun an operation to recover weapons held by former militiamen and unauthorised people.

The official aim of the sweep is to pacify ex-foes after almost five months of fighting in which weapons

were liberally distributed to the rival sides. According to officials, more than 5,000 arms have been collected, mostly in Brazzaville.

The fighting, which ended with a victory for Sassou Nguesso in October after Angolan troops helped his Cobra militia by marching into the oil and economic capital Pointe Noire, was initially sparked when Mr. Lissouba tried to disarm militia forces ahead of elections.

The latest disarmament operation has not been without bloodshed. The head of the police criminal investigation department, Colonel Jean Malonda, was killed in January by a disgruntled retired soldier as he was leading a unit collecting weapons in the centre and north of the country.

An investigation has been opened into this murder but no findings have been disclosed.

Radio Liberte charged that "ill-intentioned citizens are still keeping weapons" and also claimed that "what has just happened in Ouenze shows that people are refusing to turn in arms and defy the authorities."

Police have shot dead several people who have failed to hand over their weapons, notably looters operating in the capital.

Tortoise once thought extinct found in British zoo

BLACKPOOL, England (AFP) — A giant tortoise of a species once thought to have been extinct for 150 years has been discovered in a British zoo.

Darwin, who is one metre long, has lived a fairly obscure life in his enclosure at Blackpool zoo in northwest England for the last 26 years.

But conservationists have now classed him as a Seychelles Giant Tortoise, or Dipsochelys hololista.

Only two years ago the survival of the species thought to have died out was confirmed in the Seychelles with the discovery of eight tortoises.

Until then the animals were believed to have become extinct by 1850, picked from the sea by European sailors looking for tasty, fresh mid-voyage snacks.

Darwin, who was originally thought to have been a rare Aldabra tortoise, could now be taken to a breeding programme, Mr. Lee said.



Indonesian Research and Technology Minister Jusuf Habibie (left) and Minister for Production and Distribution Hartanto applaud President Suharto during the inauguration ceremony at the People's Consultative Assembly (Reuters photo)

New Indonesian vice president set for appointment amid opposition

JAKARTA (AFP) — Maverick Research and Technology Minister Bacharuddin Habibie prepared to be installed late Wednesday as Indonesia's vice president under his mentor Suharto, despite widespread domestic and foreign opposition.

Mr. Habibie's appointment and swearing in were scheduled to be held just hours after Mr. Suharto, who has known the 61-year-old minister since he was a boy, was returned to office for a seventh consecutive five-year term.

Both the appointments are made by a 1,000-member electoral committee, which is dominated by Mr. Suharto loyalists.

The 76-year-old Suharto, grappling with a devastating economic crisis now in its ninth month here, earlier said his deputy in the 1998-2003 term should have a sound grasp of technology, a requirement which appeared tailor-made for Mr. Habibie.

But the impending appointment has left analysts confused over Mr. Suharto's intentions. The traditionally ceremonial role of the vice president is likely to be expanded but analysts question the ability of the German-educated aircraft engineer to handle areas outside his expertise.

Judging from his record of tying politics to his projects, the prospects are not very encouraging, said Alexander Irwan, director of the Centre for Indonesia-Asia Business Information consultancy.

Concerns surrounding Mr. Habibie's penchant for building ships, planes and other capital-intensive projects have heightened as the cash-strapped government struggles with the economic crisis.

"I do not agree with his 'Great Leap Forward' philosophy," Mr. Irwan added.

"Why are we making planes if we can't control the price of milk and we're still importing so

many of the basic commodities needed by the people?"

He said Mr. Habibie may have support from the influential Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals, known locally as ICMI, but that did not mean he had it from other more important quarters such as the military.

"He may appear to have the support of certain military figures but that's because Suharto is still around. When he's not, it will be different," said Irwan, also a local columnist.

Mr. Habibie, rare in Indonesia's inner power circle for his lack of a military background, is believed to be strongly opposed by some sections of the military.

If Mr. Suharto dies or is otherwise incapacitated during his next term, a new electoral assembly is expected to be called immediately to choose another president, with Mr. Habibie thought unlikely to ascend to the top post.

Mr. Habibie was the founder of ICMI, which has been criticized since it was formed in 1991 as an attempt by the government elite to capitalise on rising Islamic sentiment in Java and Sumatra, the most populated islands in predominantly Muslim Indonesia.

Doubts have also been raised by cabinet members who served the last five years with Mr. Habibie, minister of research and technology since 1978, with one colleague saying the next vice president did not have "what it takes" to overcome the crisis or fill the president's shoes.

"At the very least, we need a figure who has a sense of crisis," outgoing Transmigration and Resettlement Minister Siswono Yudhusodo said following the announcement of Mr. Habibie's nomination last month. Others see Mr. Habibie's ascent as part of the overall streamlining of the cabinet and an expansion of

official duties to cope with the challenges of the next five years.

A researcher at the ICMI-linked Centre of Information and Development Studies likened Mr. Habibie's new role to one of a prime minister.

"It will no longer be a symbolic position but one of policy making on both economic and political matters," Umar Juoro said.

"He'll be an active vice president."

But Mr. Habibie's activity in the economy has set market analysts on edge, with some citing foreign fears that he would mismanage the economy and was unpopular with the military and ethnic-Chinese business leaders.

"Habibie is smart, but all he knows is about the aircraft industry," an analyst at a Singapore-based brokerage said, referring to Indonesia's IPTN National Aircraft Industry, the crown jewel of Mr. Habibie's projects.

"He is not an economist, although he once tried to introduce 'Habibie-nomics'," the analyst added, using the term coined for Mr. Habibie's unorthodox, nationalistic views on economics.

In the past, Mr. Habibie had been ridiculed for his "Zig Zag Inflation Theory," which, contrary to accepted economic thought, says interest rates should be lowered in periods of high inflation.

Inflation is at its highest level in decades here and trade at a near standstill following the plunge of the rupiah currency against the dollar.

The line-up of the next cabinet is widely seen as being crucial if Indonesia is to receive the next disbursement of aid agreed to under a rescue package arranged by the International Monetary Fund in January to resuscitate the country's ailing economy.

China gives green light to landmark visit by Taiwan official

BEIJING (AFP) — China Wednesday agreed to host a visit by a top Taiwanese official aimed at ending a three-year freeze on negotiations between the arch-rivals.

China's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) sent a letter to Taiwan's Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) approving a visit.

In the absence of formal links, semi-official contacts are handled through ARATS and SEF, who last held a meeting in mid-1995.

"To expand exchanges and contacts between the two associations, ARATS agrees to invite a person of a certain level to come for a visit or forum as chief of an eventual commercial or cultural delegation," said the letter, a copy of which was provided to AFP.

In the message, a response to an SEF letter dated March 5, Beijing made clear its hope that the meeting would set the stage for political talks.

"During the delegation's visit, we can also take advantage of the opportunity to exchange views on the procedure for political discussions between the two sides of the strait, as well as future visit of Koo Chen-Fu in an unofficial capacity," ARATS said.

Mr. Koo, the SEF chairman, is Taipei's top negotiator on mainland affairs.

Separately, Taiwan's government unveiled a target timetable for talks leading up to a "summit."

"If Beijing works aggressively, the two sides should at least be able to hold negotiations in the spring and summer for preparations for second summit talks," said Chang King-Yueh, Taiwan's top mainland policymaker.

SEF representatives would have to visit the mainland to improve the atmosphere before a second summit between Mr. Koo and his ARATS counterpart, Wang Daohan, could be arranged, the chairman of the

Mainland Affairs Council told parliament.

Beijing and Taipei opened a rapprochement period of regular talks in 1993, when Mr. Koo held a historic first summit with Mr. Wang in Singapore.

But the series of talks on economic and other low-level exchanges came to an abrupt halt in mid-1995, when Taiwan President Lee Teng-Hui then infuriated Beijing by making an unofficial visit to the United States.

The move was perceived here as a blatant step towards establishing independence.

China views the island as part of its territory and calls for reunification as soon as possible.

The two have been governed separately since the end of a civil war in 1949, when defeated Nationalist forces fled to Taiwan to set up a non-Communist enclave.

Although leaders from both sides have repeatedly called for direct political

talks in recent months, the proposal has been hampered by preconditions.

Beijing has insisted that such negotiations be held under the principle of "one China."

But the Taiwan government — which calls itself the Republic of China — has taken issue with that requirement, which could relegate it to an inferior position at the negotiating table.

The Communist Party newspaper, the People's Daily, Wednesday published a commentary urging Taiwan to earnestly begin reunification talks and renounce separatism.

Mr. Lee has said reunification would have to wait until China adopts a more democratic political system.

Taiwan's leading opposition party, the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party, has endorsed the dominance of Mr. Lee's ruling Kuomintang in recent local and parliamentary elections.

Rampant shoplifting plagues China shopkeepers

BEIJING (R) — An army of thieves in China's capital is stealing everything from cigarettes to toothpaste to underwear from exasperated shopkeepers, the People's daily said Wednesday.

One supermarket in a district donned with huge shopping centres had nabbed 6,000 shoplifters over the past two years, the newspaper said.

"All kinds of items except for those too

heavy to move have been stolen," it quoted one complaining department store manager as saying.

The newspaper did not place a value on the losses.

The make-up of the light-fingered army was as varied as the objects they pilfered, it said.

People from all walks of life, age groups and educational levels had been caught red-handed stuffing items under their clothes or slipping goods

into their bags, it said. Students accounted for nearly half of shoplifters, it said.

Even the most vigilant of shopkeepers had only managed to catch an estimated 50 per cent of thieves, it said.

Shoplifters caught in the act are required to pay store owners a fine equivalent to 10 times the value of the item they tried to steal. Those unable to pay are handed over to the police.

Poultry stall visits most likely cause of H. Kong bird flu

HONG KONG (AFP) — Visiting Hong Kong poultry stalls was the highest risk factor in contracting so-called "bird flu," a health study said Wednesday.

The findings came in a joint study by the Hong Kong health department and the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A health department spokesman said the case-control study was aimed at comparing different risk factors in exposure to the H5N1 flu virus.

The study covered a number of areas, including exposure to live poultry, preparing food, food eaten during the week before onset of illness and human illness exposure during the week before catching the virus.

The strongest risk factor identified is visiting poultry stalls in the one week before becoming ill," the spokesman said, adding that it supported earlier findings that human-to-human transmission of the disease, previously found only in birds, was inefficient.

Results of the case-control study were to be presented by the CDC at a session of the International Emerging Infectious Disease Conference to be held in Atlanta later Wednesday.

The spokesman said there were 18 confirmed cases of H5N1 in Hong Kong, and that last case fell ill on Dec. 28, 1997.

A 24-year-old woman was still being treated and in stable condition, while 11 others have been discharged. Six people died of the disease.

The bird flu scare prompted the government to slaughter some 1.5 million chickens in Hong Kong in December and to ban chicken imports from China in a bid to curb the spread of the deadly virus.

Chicken imports were allowed to resume on Feb. 7 after strict new hygiene measures were implemented, with the ban on other poultry likely to be lifted by the end of March.

Dumas too ill to be questioning in Elf fraud

BORDEAUX, France (AFP) — Former French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas will be unable to answer questions in a graft probe involving oil giant Elf-Aquitaine and a sale of warships to Taiwan after undergoing a stomach operation, sources close to Mr. Dumas said Wednesday.

Mr. Dumas, who as president of France's top court, the Constitutional Council, is fifth in the state hierarchy, has been summoned for interrogation March 18 by magistrates probing the murky dealings of the formerly state-owned Elf conglomerate.

Sources close to his family said he had been operated in a private clinic in this southwestern city Tuesday due to an infection linked to two previous operations in June 1996. The sources gave no further details.

The Bordeaux daily Sud Ouest said surgeons had operated on his stomach.

Sources close to Mr. Dumas, who is 75, said he would not be fit to meet investigating magistrates Eva Joly and Laurence Viduievsky next Wednesday because of the surgery. Doctors are to issue a statement on his state Thursday or Friday.

In an interview this week, Mr. Dumas denied wrongdoing in the Elf scandal and said he was speaking out because "I want certain things to be said before I undergo surgery which has been scheduled since December and which presents a risk."



Riot police chase demonstrators in the centre of Santiago after a protest march against General Augusto Pinochet turned violent following a ceremony in which the former dictator retired as commander-in-chief of the armed forces (Reuters photo)

Anti-Pinochet demonstrators turn violent

SANTIAGO (AFP) — Three people were injured, a bus was set on fire and several stores were damaged here overnight during violent street protests against former dictator Augusto Pinochet's decision to become a senator.

Police used armoured vehicles to break up several demonstrations and clear streets of barricades in some 10 areas in the centre and suburbs of the city.

The clashes left three people injured, a bus in flames and several vehicles and storefronts damaged, police said. The city's power grid

was also the target of protesters who used chains to short out power lines, police added.

Mr. Pinochet, who Tuesday resigned as commander in chief of the army, was expected to be sworn in as a senator-for-life Wednesday, under a constitutional provision he himself pushed through when he ruled the country from 1973 to 1990.

Protests have been increasing in scope and violence since Tuesday, when police used water cannon and tear gas to break up an anti-Pinochet demonstration near La Moneda presidential palace that lasted more than four hours — 70 people were arrested and 12 were injured.

More than 500 protesters later that night held a candlelight vigil outside Congress in Valparaiso, 100 kilometres west of here, where Mr. Pinochet is scheduled to be sworn in as senator Wednesday.

Also late Tuesday, national television quoted "reliable sources" as saying that police had been put under alert on reports that an attempt might be made against Mr. Pinochet's life.

Leading lights of 'Cool Britannia' turn backs on Blair

LONDON (AFP) — The leading lights of "Cool Britannia" Wednesday used the newspaper of the British pop scene to turn their backs on Prime Minister Tony Blair.

An array of some of the biggest names in "Britpop", the new wave of guitar-based pop of which Oasis is the most famous exponent, strongly criticised Blair in this week's edition of New Musical Express (NME).

NME said it was protesting at Labour's plans for curfews for young people, university tuition fees, unemployment benefit and the government's refusal to reopen the debate on legalising drugs.

The attack will come as an embarrassment to Blair who has gone out of his way to court and celebrate the freshest and most famous faces in British pop and rock as well as art, television and film, at a series of receptions at his official residence in Downing Street.

In an editorial quoting one of Blair's soundbite phrases, NME said: "Tony Blair has already made his 'hard choices' and he has chosen Uncool Britannia — the rich, the powerful, the established, the privileged and the reactionary — every single time."

"And still Blair continues to bask in the reflected glory of Cool Britannia. The question is: how long are we going to let him get away with it?"

The issue, headlined "Ever Had the Feeling You've Been Cheated?", featured exhaustively negative interviews with Damon Albarn, lead singer of "Blur", Jarvis Cocker of "Pulp", Ian Broudie of the "Lightning Seeds", and Bobby Gillespie of "Primal Scream."

The artists were most sharply critical of the Labour government's "welfare to work" policies, which give unemployed youngsters the choice of finding a job, joining a public works employment scheme or having their benefit cut.

Cocker said unemployment benefit allowed "Pulp" survive for six years, while Alan McGee, head of Oasis's record label Creation Records, who gave 50,000 pounds (\$80,000) to Labour before the general election, warned the policy could "kill my business."

"My business needs kids coming through for me to pick them up, and they'll do that best after two years on the dole (unemployment benefit) writing tunes," said McGee.

McGee serves on government task-force committees on the music industry and has attended the Downing Street receptions along with Oasis song-writer Noel Gallagher, but two weeks ago refused meet employment ministers in protest at welfare to work.

"On one hand you've got Tony Blair making this thing about Cool Britannia, but on the other hand they're taking away the means for the next generation of artists and musicians to go away and create," said McGee.

Cocker commented that he almost preferred the previous Conservative government to the present administration, and Broudie said Labour was not "different enough."

"It is like a different bloke in charge of the same board," he said. Gillespie said that unlike Blair, former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was at least "honest" about her "systematic destruction" of the trade union movement and working class.

Asked if pop stars should go to Blair's receptions, he said: "Only with half kilo of Semtex or a nail bomb."

German minister slams states for deportation stop

BONN (R) — Germany's interior minister Wednesday criticised a decision by seven states to temporarily stop deporting ethnic Albanians to the restive Balkan cauldron of Kosovo, saying the action might attract more refugees to Germany.

"This sends out a devastating signal," Manfred Kanther told German radio. "Stopping the deportations sends a signal far away and has the danger of encouraging many to try to come to Germany."

Interior ministers in seven states where the opposition Social Democrats (SPD) are in power said they were halting the forced repatriation of ethnic Albanians until violence subsides in the province.

But Mr. Kanther said the move was causing problems.

"Many will feel like they should try to come illegally to Germany because they would be allowed to stay here once they get here," he said.

"These states have gone out to trumpet this news and are causing a lot of difficulties."

At least 80 people have been killed in a Serbian security forces' crackdown on majority ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. There are about 140,000 ethnic Albanians living in Germany, many of whom came during the Balkan war.

Mr. Kanther said Germany has given shelter to more refugees from former Yugoslavia than the rest of the European Union combined. He said Germany simply cannot afford to accept everyone who wants to come.

About 6,000 ethnic Albanians have been sent home.

He blasted the states' unilateral decision to suspend the deportations, pointing out that they have the right to determine when the refugees are sent home and could have thus "quietly" suspended the repatriations

without broadcasting their move.

"There is no reason to suspend the deportations," Mr. Kanther said. "If someone's life is endangered, he will not be deported. We do not know of any case where a repatriated person's life was endangered. It is not accurate to say these attacks are happening all over Kosovo."

Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said in a separate interview in the Westfalen-Blatt newspaper that there was no need for Germany to put a universal ban on the deportations, but defended the state interior ministers' decision as "legitimate."

Mr. Kinkel was quoted in the newspaper saying the deportations should be carried out judiciously and only on a case-by-case basis. He said the situation in Kosovo is tense at the moment and can change each day.

Mr. Kanther said even though the conditions in

some areas of Kosovo were dangerous, the government and the foreign ministry were confident ethnic Albanians could be sent to their homes in parts of the province without their lives being at risk.

"There have been the most brutal attacks in some regions that are to be condemned," Mr. Kanther said. But that was not the case for the entire country, he added.

Mr. Kanther said the seven states had broken an agreement with the federal government and their actions would damage German foreign policies. He said the SPD-led states were playing politics and trying to embarrass Chancellor Helmut Kohl's conservative government.

More than 300,000 people fled to Germany from former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. Cash-strapped German states have told the refugees they have to leave and began deporting them last year.

Brussels threatens to sue EU states over U.S. 'open skies' deals

STRASBOURG (AFP) — The European Commission has threatened to sue eight EU members that signed bilateral aviation deals with the United States, a commission spokesman said Wednesday.

Brussels claims such deals open national markets in Europe to U.S. airlines without letting European carriers compete in the United States.

The eight countries are Austria, Belgium, Britain, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Luxembourg and Sweden.

The commission Friday will issue what is known in Brussels-speak as a "reasoned

opinion" — the last step in EU procedures before suspected violators of competition rules are taken to the European Court of Justice, the spokesman said.

He was reporting on the results of a weekly meeting of EU commissioners in Strasbourg.

The eight countries will have two months to provide detailed explanations of their aviation deals with the United States.

The commission says these arrangements adversely affect the EU's internal market and distort competition between

airlines and between airports.

The EU's transport commissioner, Neil Kinnock, has been seeking increased powers to negotiate with Washington over landing rights, because he believes "bilateral deals undermine the commission's efforts to obtain better access for all EU carriers."

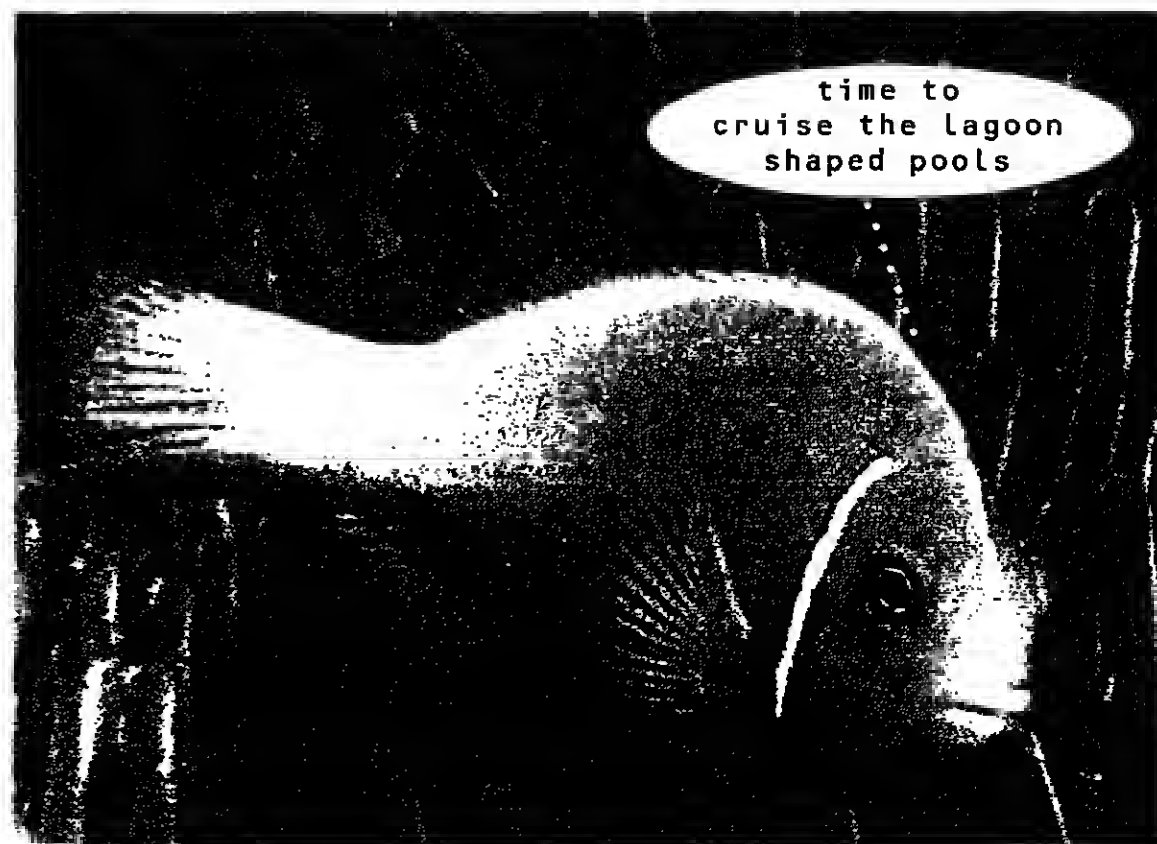
But EU members, including Britain and France, have insisted on conducting their own negotiations with the United States.

Washington has made the bilateral agreements, forged over the past four years, a

condition for granting the green light to a series of airline alliances between U.S. and European carriers.

These include partnerships between Lufthansa of Germany and United Airlines, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines and NorthWest and Air France's alliance with Delta and Continental.

A planned link-up between British Airways and American Airlines, which would create the world's most powerful aviation partnership, has been held up by Brussels, which has launched anti-trust inquiries into all the alliances.



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Montand corpse to be exhumed for DNA

PARIS (R) — The body of the late French actor-singer Yves Montand was due to be exhumed Wednesday evening for a post-mortem paternity test sought by a woman claiming to be his daughter, the daily Le Parisien reported.

The city coroner's office had no comment on the report. Le Parisien said the corpse of Montand, buried alongside his first wife actress Simone Signoret, would be removed from their grave after visiting hours at the Père-Lachaise cemetery in Paris and brought to the city's medical-legal institute.

A panel of three doctors would have until June 30 to determine whether DNA samples proved Montand, who died in 1991 aged 70, was the father of French woman Aurèle Drossart, now 22. Drossart and her mother

Anne, who was Montand's companion in the 1970s, first filed a paternity suit against the actor in the late 1980s. A court ordered Montand to undergo a DNA test in 1990 but he refused, insisting he was not Drossart's father.

In 1994, a court ruled Drossart was indeed Montand's daughter on the basis of her resemblance to the actor and testimony by witnesses. Experts compared Drossart's DNA with that of Montand's sister, and son but came to no conclusion.

Last November, another court finally ordered his body to be exhumed for a posthumous DNA test.

The two families involved were informed about the plan and lawyers, judges and police were due to be present when the grave was dug up,

Le Parisien said.

Montand's DNA samples, which would have to come from his teeth or bones because of the long period since his death, would be compared with those of Drossart and her mother, it said.

When it was handed down last November, the exhumation order provoked anger and revulsion among his family and the media.

"Leave Montand in peace", "Morbidity and regrettable", "The dangers of show business justice", were among the headlines in French newspapers.

"To settle a family affair which is in reality a question of money (through an inheritance claim), the ground is going to be broken to extract a coffin and open it. These acts can only provoke repulsion and anger," left-wing daily Liberation said.

... ..

Society on the move

Visits and their various dimensions

There are more than a few worthy footnotes to the, by all accounts, highly successful visit Tuesday of HRH Crown Prince Hassan to Tel Aviv. Among the diverse delegation accompanying Prince Hassan, the show of force of nine members of the Lower House of Parliament including Speaker Saad Hayel Srour could be indicative, say observers, of a new path in the halls of the legislature. Recall that only last December two deputies came under heavy fire by their colleagues and constituents for meeting in Jerusalem with Israeli Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon. Those two deputies, Hamada Fara'neh, an independent representing Amman's 1st District, and Islamist Mohammad Rafat of Balqa, who responded to the criticism of their visit by saying it was unofficial, were not among the delegation visiting Israel on Tuesday. Those who accompanied the Crown Prince were Sami Khasawneh (independent, Irbid), Bassam Haddadin (Christian, Jordanian Democratic Union Party, leftist, Zarqa), Ali Abul Ragheb (centrist - Amman), Ziad Shweikh (centrist - Aqaba), Nawaf Khawaldeh (independent-centrist, Mafrq) Abdullah Jazi (independent-centrist, Central Bedouins), Nayef Mawla (independent-centrist, Amman) and Riyadh Othman (independent-centrist, Jerash). This parliamentary contingent helped to make up the team of public and private professionals who despite major setbacks see peace in the region as the only alternative. Their purpose was to demonstrate by their presence their commitment to peace, their expectation of fruits from that peace, and the value of engaging.

Upon arrival in Tel Aviv the delegation was welcomed by the Israeli Foreign Ministry's Deputy Director of the Jordan Office. He told the Jordanians that the ministry sent out 115 invitations to the dinner that was to be hosted by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the occasion of the Crown Prince's visit, and the ministry received an almost immediate positive response from 100 invitees. Never before, he said, has any official event drawn such enthusiasm. The proof was that at the end of his strong speech at the dinner held at the Tel Aviv Hilton in his honour, Prince Hassan was accorded a long standing ovation by the 150 guests who, besides senior Israeli officials, included former Ambassador to Jordan Professor Shimon Shamir and Professor Asher Sussor of Tel Aviv University's Moshe Dayan Centre as well as other intellectuals, writers, artists and journalists. In fact that sort of reception should well have been expected judging from the number of Israelis who throughout the dinner walked up to the Crown Prince's table to shake his hand and greet him. It was a wonder he was able to get through first-course, some guests remarked.

On the return trip, Prince Hassan hopped aboard Royal Wings (a.k.a. Ahd Qantar's plane) and was greeted to the applause of the Jordanian team. What to look for now, on the media front at least, is whether or not the Israeli media take up the Crown Prince's challenge to begin discussions on scenarios of reconciliation between the Arabs and Jews.



Seated at the dinner hosted in honour of HRH Crown Prince Hassan by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Tel Aviv on Tuesday are (left to right) Israeli Minister of Infrastructure Ariel Sharon, Minister of Defence Yitzhak Mordechai, Crown Prince Hassan, Mr. Netanyahu, Lower House Speaker Saad Hayel Srour, Israeli Minister of Trade and Industry Natan Sharansky, Minister of Foreign Affairs Jawad Anani (photo by Boghos)

PLANNING MORE VISITS: Here on a low-profile visit this week was UNRWA Commissioner General Peter Hansen. Mr. Hansen Sunday met with Palestinian Affairs Department Director General Ibrahim Badran, and on Monday met with Minister of Foreign Affairs Jawad Anani. He was here as part of a regular visit to the region to follow up on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency's operations. Mr. Hansen indicated that he wished to increase his visits to Syria and Lebanon as he has made official trips to these two refugee host countries only twice before since he assumed his post as UNRWA chief.

DOUBLE DUTIES: Ihsan Ramzi, director general of the Jordan Radio and Television Corporation, last week assumed a second post, that of secretary-general of the

Ministry of Information. Reports are that Mr. Ramzi, a JRTC pillar, having spent more than 30 years at the corporation, has been spending most of his time at the ministry, where newly appointed Minister of Information Abdullah Ensour is said to be intent on taking the official information sector into new directions. But with two portfolios, Dr. Ensour this past week appears to have been preoccupied with his duties as deputy prime minister. We'll have to wait and see what's in store.

EXTRA, EXTRA: In the private media arena, the major weekly tabloids which had been forced to shut down under the now repealed temporary amendments to the Press and Publications Law have splashed back on the newsstands over the past few weeks. The multicoloured front page headlines of two such papers, Al Badal and Al Hadeeth, last week focused on reports of Hizballah making

an entry into Jordan. Blazoned in red, another headline in Al Hadeeth read, "Secrets of Toujan's meeting with the Israelis," referring to former deputy Toujan Feisal having a discussion with Secretary of the Israeli Labour Party Ra'nan Cohen at an International Parliamentary Union Conference held nearly a year ago in Seoul, South Korea. It just goes to show you that on the pages of the "yellow press" everyone is fair game.

CHOICE MADE: At the Aqaba Regional Authority, the post of secretary general, left vacant since early February by the move of Muzahem Muheisan to the same post at the Ministry of Transport, has been filled by one of the two persons first tipped for the job. The winner is Akef Abu Tayeh, formerly deputy director general at the Arab Maritime Bridge Company.

THEIR HONOURS: Rounding out the week which celebrated International Women's Day, three women attorneys were appointed Tuesday as judges to the Magistrate Court. They are Inas Khalidi, Fida Abdul Jawad, and Malak Ghazal. In addition, Nawaf Johari was appointed assistant to the Attorney General of the Civil Court. Attempts to locate the new appointees went in vain. The women's movement has not gotten around to encouraging women to list their own names in the telephone directory — once again the trail is either linked to a father or husband.

150 YEARS AGO: The Hungarian revolution of 1848 was part of a mainstream of momentous events in Europe at the time. Today the Embassy of the Republic of Hungary in Amman will mark the anniversary of the country's struggle for independence. Chargé d'Affaires Dr. Attila Scento will welcome associates and friends to a reception at the embassy itself.

DUTY FREE: As promised, the Jordan Duty Free Shops launched another of their facilities this week. This one is located at the King Hussein Bridge. JDFS Director Hanihan Majali opened the shop, which will serve travellers crossing the bridge in either direction, at a ceremony on Wednesday in the Jordan Valley.

Another Friday the 13th.

Jennifer Hamarnich

Don't speak

By Jean-Claude Elias

A FEW weeks ago I reviewed the newest speech recognition software. The three leaders in this domain are Dragon's NaturallySpeaking, IBM's ViaVoice and Kurzweil's VoicePro.

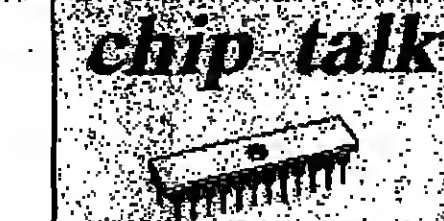
From embryonic and experimental the programmes have matured to become truly usable applications. Relatively easy to install and operate, they allow users to speak in a microphone and see the spoken words change to typed text on the PCs monitor.

The level of accuracy is good — 70 to 90 percent — though not excellent. We can be sure, however, that in a couple of years accuracy may be as high as 98 or even 99 percent.

Still, one may step back and wonder if talking to computers is the best way to communicate with them in the future, whether to dictate text or to give them orders. For the vast majority of those who are slow at keyboard typing it may be considered as a good thing, but for those who are fast and comfortable with a computer keyboard, talking to the machine could prove to be a less efficient method.

Whatever improvement speech recognition may receive in the years to come, it will always be subject to the imperfections of human speech: local accents, tone and levels variations, ambient noise, quality of microphones used and so forth.

By trying hard to make computers understand human speech, we may be treating them like human beings, which of course they are not. The whole approach may be wrong. It's similar to the way musicians used synthesizers in the seventies and in the eight-



ies. They wanted them to perfectly reproduce the sound of natural, acoustic instruments, but no "synth" could really sound like a real violin or flute. Nowadays modern musicians are making smarter use of synthesizers. Instead of trying to mimic acoustic instruments in vain, they use them for what they actually are — completely new instruments with sounds of their own and huge possibilities.

Computer keyboards will always be more accurate than speech. Moreover, imagine how noisy an open space office would be with many people talking to their PCs! At least keyboards are silent. Besides, with the proper combination of mouse and keyboard use, one can achieve fast and smooth operating.

In the future speech recognition may co-exist along with keyboards and mice. In specific situations it may even prove to be more convenient than them. But it will probably never completely replace them.

Correction

Apologies for the error readers may have spotted in last week's Chip Talk. Not only did I mix up LEDs (light emitting diodes) and LCDs (liquid crystal displays), but I also labelled the latter as "liquid crystal diodes," obviously a non-existing hybrid. I would like to thank Mr. G. Courtois, the ambassador of Belgium, and Mr. F. Alves, the ambassador of Brazil, both highly knowledgeable and talented computer users, for having drawn my attention to this mistake and for... being faithful readers of this column.

King calls for development of badia through collective efforts of citizens

(Continued from page 1)

established in 1992 under the patronage of Prince Hassan has been designed to help develop the semi-desert areas of Jordan which constitute 80 per cent of Jordan's territory. The programme is being directed through a centre located at Safawi village, some 156 km north east of Amman.

Prince Hassan had earlier met at Al Hassan Air-Base representatives, as well as senators and deputies, from the northern, central and southern Badia regions in Jordan.

In remarks to the audience, Prince Hassan urged all those concerned with the development of the badia region and its wealth to work together in a comprehensive manner. He also called for the creation of an institution designated to the development of the region.

He urged the concerned parties to benefit from modern technology and sound information in the course of their endeavours.

The Crown Prince also urged government institutions to coordinate and

cooperate among themselves in questions related to the badia's development.

In his address, Prince Hassan said that the meeting was designed to discuss a new approach on dealing with water and the desert environment.

Prince Hassan said that all regions in the north, centre and south will be given equal attention and serious efforts will be exerted to develop their natural and human resources.

Prince Hassan said he will give due attention to the directives of King Hussein in following up on the implementation of future stages in the badia development programme.

In order to safeguard the badia region and its wealth for the coming generations, Prince Hassan said public interest should rise over the personal interest and everybody should work as a team for the benefit of all.

Accompanying the King and the Crown Prince were also Royal Court Chief Fayed Turawneh and other officials and ministers.

King off to Washington to 'spell out dangers of deadlock in peace process'

(Continued from page 1)

Palestinians attacked Israeli soldiers with rocks and firebombs to protest the killing of three Palestinians Tuesday at an Israeli roadblock in the West Bank. The clashes underline Jordan's fears of violence on the West Bank creating a new wave of refugees flooding into the Kingdom.

The talks in Washington come on the heels of the high-level talks in Amman and Tel Aviv which signalled the warming of ties after a period of tense relations following the Israeli assassination attempt against Hamas leader Khaled Misha'al in Amman last fall.

Israeli officials said the talks also paved the way for restoring full security cooperation between the two sides in accordance with the 1994 peace treaty. This followed the resignation of Mossad chief Danny Yatom, who was replaced by Ephraim Halevy, the man who served as contact man between Jordanian and Israeli officials prior to the signing of the peace treaty.

"It makes sense ahead of the Washington talks to improve Jordan's relations with Israel," a Western diplomatic source said. "It would otherwise be

difficult for Jordan to make the argument for advancing the peace process on the Palestinian front or to act as a facilitator in the process."

Jordan's Ambassador to Washington Marwan Muasher said the stalled peace process "does not only affect Palestinians and Israelis, but also deeply affect us. We cannot accept the status quo situation."

Dr. Muasher told the Jordan Times from Washington that the King will be "urging the U.S. administration to move forward and to move more assertively."

Assistant U.S. Secretary of State for Near East Affairs Martin Indyk said Tuesday that Washington "has no intention of imposing a U.S. plan" on the two sides in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

The talks in Washington are also expected to touch on Jordan's "ideas" for an end to the crisis between Baghdad and the Security Council based on the full implementation of U.N. resolutions and the signed agreement between U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz.

While Jordan denied it was carrying an initiative for a

direct dialogue between Iraq and the U.S., Western diplomats said the U.S. administration and Congress "were not ready for any dialogue with Baghdad."

On the economic level, Dr. Muasher said that fiscal year 1998 has witnessed a dramatic increase in U.S. aid levels to Jordan.

"The increase is a result of the administration and Congress' appreciation of Jordan's role in the peace process and the Kingdom's clear economic objective that it is trying to achieve," he said. He explained that Jordan was expected to receive around \$200 million in U.S. aid.

The King will be having extensive meetings on Capitol Hill with Senate and House leaders, in addition to the meeting with the president and high-level administration officials.

Jordanian officials said the King's busy schedule in Washington reflects the U.S. appreciation of Jordan's constructive role in backing the peace process on the one hand, and the Jordanian leadership's appreciation of Congress' role in endorsing American aid to the Kingdom on the other.

U.N. envoy prepares for inspections of special sites

(Continued from page 1)

diplomatic representation in Baghdad and in the region, including Britain and the United States, asking for their participation in the presidential site inspections.

Along with Mr. Dhanepala, another new appointee since the February accord, former Indian diplomat Prakash Shah, is due in Baghdad later this week to set up a political liaison office for the U.N. secretary general.

Mr. Dhanepala's mission came as U.S. officials welcomed Iraq's cooperation with an UNSCOM team led by former U.S. Marine Scott Ritter,

whose last mission in January had been blocked.

Mr. Ritter's team left Baghdad on Tuesday at the end of a five-day mission during which it inspected eight sites declared sensitive by Iraq. The work was completed to the "full satisfaction" of UNSCOM, said Mr. Sullivan.

Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon welcomed as a positive development the fact that the team had inspected various Iraqi sites not previously open to the U.N. weapons inspectors. UNSCOM officials here have refused to comment on reports that the team tested the limits of the February accord by con-

ducting inspections right up to the boundaries of presidential sites as demarcated by U.N. surveyors.

A team of U.N. mappers sent out in advance of the accord mapped out boundaries for the eight sites.

Under last month's accord, Baghdad averted threatened U.S. military strikes by agreeing to unfettered access for the arms inspectors searching for Iraqi weapons secrets. In January, Iraq blocked Mr. Ritter's work on the grounds that his team was dominated by U.S. and British nationals whose countries take a tough line against lifting of sanctions.

(Continued from page 1)

favoured a broad-based dialogue between the government and political forces before the draft legislation is sent to Parliament.

"The problem with the government is that it always has everything ready. But such a key legislation as the elections law should be discussed between the government and civil society," said Saleem Nahhas, secretary general of the leftist Al Hashd.

Deputy Mohammad Ouran (Tafleeh) added that "each political party should have a say in the formation of the new elections law, as they are the pillars of democracy and pluralism."

Dr. Ouran, who also heads the leftist Arab Land Party, told the Jordan Times that the

higher council for coordination among the 13 opposition parties this week discussed plans to prepare their own draft elections law. The bloc groups Islamists and Communists as well as pro-Iraqi and pro-Syrian Baathists who have put aside decades of ideological differences to combat government policies, including the 1994 peace treaty with Israel.

The opposition has locked horns with the government over the elections law since 1993, when the first government of Dr. Majali introduced the one-man, one-vote system by temporary legislation a few days ahead of that year's elections. The law, endorsed by Parliament in 1997, gave registered voters the right to choose one candidate, instead of several as in

the past.

The Islamists said the introduction of the electoral formula then helped reduce their representation in Parliament from 22 deputies in 1989 to 16 in 1993.

Since then, the opposition has been arguing that in Jordan's tribal-based society voters would cast their one vote according to family considerations, and not in line with political affiliation.

The opposition, angered by the peace treaty and an alleged crackdown on public freedoms, boycotted the Nov. 4 elections in protest against the one-person, one-vote system.

His Majesty King Hussein entrusted the government of Dr. Majali with a mandate to prepare a new elections law to help "modernise and

develop existing legislation," in his Speech from the Throne, last December, inaugurating the 13th Parliament.

"But the one-person, one-vote system will remain the core of the issue," said Mr. Nahhas.

He said the party in charge of supervising future elections was another main concern for the opposition.

"The judiciary, as an independent body, should be in charge of supervising the elections, not the Interior Ministry," he said.

"But the government is not telling us whether the Ministry of Interior will maintain its function as the elections' supervisor."

ment and civil society, to monitor the fairness of election procedures," he said.

Echoing views of other opposition leaders, Mr. Nahhas denied that the replacement of the "old-fashioned" voting cards with magnetic cards will prevent voters from casting their ballots more than once.

"This will not prevent people from using cards issued to others, of Jordanians residing abroad and even of dead people," he said.

During the last elections, one opposition candidate — former Deputy Toujan Feisal — produced voting cards at a press conference that she said had been issued to people deceased years earlier.

Mathieson: Jordan provides foreign investors with one of the most advanced incentives

Stanford Research Institute ranks Jordan's commercial policies as highest in Mideast

By Ghalia Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan's commercial policies have been ranked by the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) as the highest in the Middle East compared to regional benchmarks — Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Bahrain and Cyprus.

In the commercial policy matrix, Jordan scored 77 out of a maximum score of 100 while Egypt had the lowest at 62.

"Jordan's standings represent a strong business-friendly environment," according to a summary of Jordan's Commercial Policy Assessment prepared by SRI.

In a seminar jointly organised by the Investment Promotion Corporation (IPC) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), SRI Director of Economic Practice John Mathieson gave a comprehensive presentation on Jordan's economic performance as well as the findings on the country's commercial policy.

He said Jordan provided foreign investors with one of the most advanced incentives.

Non-Jordanian investors can have full equity ownership in all sectors except in the construction, mining, commercial and commercial service sectors in which the ownership may not exceed 50 per cent.

Jordan, he said, should work towards eliminating the 50 per cent ceiling on investment in these sectors and easing foreign labour restrictions.

Mr. Mathieson added that Jordan's policy climate also compares favourably with those of many industrialised OECD (Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development) nations.

He said the Kingdom's import and export policies are the most rational in the region, while tax and labour policies are among the most business-friendly in the world.

However, Mr. Mathieson added, in order for Jordan to enhance its policy environment, more attention should be paid to improve business start-up procedures and the foreign exchange regime.

Jordan's bureaucracy and red tape procedures are considered by many foreign investors as obstacles hindering smooth establishment and operations of a business in the country.

The recent pegging of the Jordanian dinar to the U.S. dollar — instead of linking it to a basket of five major currencies — may create additional risks for a foreign investor because of the fluctuation in dollar value, Mr. Mathieson added.

In his opening remarks to the seminar, USAID/Jordan mission director, Lewis Lucke, said: "We need a Jordanian entrepreneur to marvel at how easy it is to register a business, not how frustrating it is. We need an international investor to tell stories about how easy it is to clear customs, not how many days or how many signatures are required."

Mr. Mathieson said Jordan must "put in place the best commercial policies" in order to deal with the regional instability and the limited size of its market.

To offset these constraints, Mr. Mathieson said, Jordan should fully implement the recently instituted reforms and aggressively promote a new investment-friendly climate.

Since Jordan launched its structural adjustment programme in 1989, it has introduced a comprehensive package of economic legislations to create an efficient and transparent business environment.

These laws include customs, income tax, sales tax, companies, labour, anti-trust, insurance, securities and investment promotion laws.

Full market access to

neighbouring countries should be encouraged through reaching bilateral free trade agreements and accelerating negotiations to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Deputising for Industry and Trade Minister Hani Mulki, IPC Director General Montaser Oklah said "remarkable progress has been achieved towards increasing market size through integrating Jordan's economy with the region and the world."

Jordan and the European Union signed an association agreement last November with the aim of creating a free trade area by the year 2010.

Jordan and Israel also signed an agreement in November designating Al Hassan Industrial Estate in Irbid as a Qualifying Industrial Zone, granting industries free access to U.S. markets.

Dr. Oklah said Jordan has also recently joined and approved the Arab Free Trade Agreement.

Mr. Mathieson said to stimulate new investments, Jordan should also work towards eliminating visas for some countries and easing procedures for business visas.

The country, he added, should enact intellectual property rights laws — a prerequisite for Jordan to integrate into the world economy.

"The great challenge that faces us now, since the ball lies in our court as policy-makers, is to further implement the pending laws and remove all existing constraints and obstacles that face the private sector," said Dr. Oklah.

IPC Assistant Director General Reem Badran reviewed the corporation's efforts in promoting Jordan as a very competitive market for national and international businesses.

She said IPC in collaboration with the World Bank have concluded the formulation of a National Investment Promotion Strategy which features the professional services

rendered to investors through its one-stop-service programme.

Ms. Badran added that a road map study will be conducted to review the administrative procedures governing investment in both the tourism and manufacturing sectors.

According to Mr. Lucke, "at a policy level, Jordan outperforms many of its neighbours and fares relatively well, even from a global, worldwide standpoint."

"Given the progress Jordan has achieved in implementing economic reforms in recent years, I see no reason why it should not continue along its pragmatic, problem-solving path that looks for opportunities where they exist and doesn't just talk about problems but actively looks for ways to resolve them," he said.

He said the USAID plans to extend financial and technical assistance to support Jordan's balance of payments, fiscal policy reforms, civil service, and policy reform procedures.

Further assistance will be allocated to help Jordan increase private sector competitiveness, said Mr. Lucke, adding that measures will also be provided to address intellectual property rights.

"We are also trying to provide technical assistance and training to IPC to help it develop its own capacity to ultimately market Jordan," Mr. Lucke said.

Participants concluded the seminar by proposing some recommendations to try and overcome the obstacles hindering direct foreign investments to the Kingdom.

They called for efficient and sustainable implementation of new economic legislation through well-trained government staff.

They also urged the government to implement further administrative reforms and provide quality information to domestic and foreign investors.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) If you want that promotion, you're going to have to learn how to take care of others even better than you have before. Some people will be interested in serving you, but they're simply part of the greater whole. If you focus on what's best for everyone, you'll create a very powerful relationship.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You're saving up for a vacation, or perhaps making plans to get married. Maybe you're doing both! In the morning, everything seems wonderful. By afternoon, it's dawning on you how much work it's going to take. It's a rude awakening, but you should be pleased. You're getting into the reality phase of the project.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) There's a flurry of activity this morning, but by afternoon, you'll be able to spend some time with your best friend. This would be a marvellous weekend for romance, starting this afternoon. Don't overlook an older person's needs, however. He or she could make your life complicated if you forget to do something you promised.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) Get organised this morning. You're getting better at setting priorities. A course you've been taking seems to help. The talents you're developing now will help you achieve the life you've always wanted. If you stay home and read all weekend, it would be time well spent, and would definitely further your overall objective.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) The check that was in the mail is finally coming in. Don't take it for granted. You tend to be extravagant. Be careful of that this evening. Count the money, put it somewhere safe and leave it there. Since education seems associated with this windfall, start by proving that you really are smart. Don't blow it.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Everyone wants you to solve their problems. Well, go ahead, but don't do for free. There's something you've been thinking about buying for a long time, but you haven't had the money. Since it looks like you'll have enough for at least a down payment this afternoon, you'd better get going.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Have a private lunch with your favourite person. You two have lots to talk about. You might even want to draw up a few blueprints. If you want to take your dreams to a tangible state, it's an awkward transition. It's easier to let a dream be a dream. Don't be afraid. This could turn out to be fun.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You'll be popular today and there will be more than enough to keep you busy. Some of it may pertain to work. That's good; you could use the money. You've come up with new ways to spend it lately. There's an outlay required to achieve a goal you've set for yourself. Don't get carried away, however. Keep it simple.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You might get a chance to visit with friends this evening. What better excuse for a party? You have all sorts of interesting things to talk about, and other people love to listen. You have some of the best philosophical conversations available on the planet right there. Don't miss a minute of it.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Your friends help you get what you want this morning. It's as if you're passing the ball to them, they're shooting the baskets and you get to be on the winning team. Get as much done early as you possibly can, because your luck changes slightly later in the day. It'll be more difficult to make a decision.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This week might seem like one hassle after another. You deserve a reward this weekend. Travel, adventure, excitement, romance — all of those are possible. They may happen without your even having to set things up, but why take chances? Call up a favourite friend and make a date.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Take time this morning to form an agreement you can live with, then put it into practice this afternoon. If money is required, a discussion of the financing is the best thing you could do this afternoon. It's also the next step in your quest for success, so don't be afraid to bring up the topic.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You've got a mountain of work to do, and somebody's pushing you to finish it. This is especially difficult if you're in a one-person office, where there's no one else to toss the ball to. You're going to have to do it all by yourself. And even worse, you're going to have to relax and enjoy it.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) There could be a surprise this morning concerning money you share with someone else. Perhaps the other person spent more of it than you thought. You probably should ask for an accounting, especially if that person is normally frivolous. In fact, this might be a good excuse for you to get control of the chequebook altogether.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) If you have houseguests, there's a dilemma. You want to be home with them, yet you have to work. Even when you do get home, you may find yourself talking about work. There's definitely conflict between your home life and your career this evening. Minimise it by getting your priorities straight.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) You're exhibiting talents other people didn't know you had. You may not have known, either. Things that had been difficult suddenly seem easy this afternoon. You may have a little trouble this evening, however. You'd like to go far away, but chores are keeping you close to home. Settle for the chores. It is a weeknight, after all.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) If you don't think you can afford to go back to school, think again. If you'd taken the plunge earlier, your career earning power could be higher. You might find a way now to make the money school would require. Why don't you give the college of your choice a call and ask what possibilities are out there?

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) The people who hold the purse strings are looking in your direction. They see your talent and they're thinking of ways to put it to work. A co-worker also admires your organisational ability. He or she has creative talent, but sometimes forgets simple appointments. You don't, and that's good for all concerned.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You're trying to figure out how to do something, but the solution is proving elusive. You just don't have enough information. Do the research this morning and you'll solve the problem more easily tomorrow. Actually, you've learned a lot already. Give yourself credit for that and keep going.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) A friend of yours is under quite a bit of pressure. You might be able to help alleviate it. You need to figure out what's going on. The friend's erratic behaviour is your first clue something's amiss. Offer to help with the workload. It will be greatly appreciated.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You want to go places you've never been and do things you've never done. You could succeed beyond your wildest dreams if you let these fantasies play themselves out. There may be more education required, but that's OK. You can do part of it in the privacy of your own home.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Continue to cram. There's a big test coming up, and you'll definitely have an advantage if you've done the homework. Don't wait until tomorrow to put your plans in place. If you've already got them figured out by then, you'll be able to relax instead of stressing. A good trade.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) If you don't already have a list of your resources, this is a good day to compile one. Figure out what you owe, and to whom. Also, recalculate the value of what you own. It may have changed since you last looked. Focusing on the big picture helps you stay in control, which is where you feel comfortable.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You may feel like you're being stretched between two opposing points of view. One of them is your own. The other belongs to another strong individual. Actually, the key to your success may be a completely different line of reasoning. Look to an older, more experienced person for that.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

1 Baby powder
5 Ship end
10 George Bernard
14 Opera song
15 Free-for-all
16 Customary time
17 Grizzly on Wall Street?
19 Comic Johnson
20 Ironic humor
21 Relative through marriage
23 Last of a cigar
24 Journalist Bly
25 Hardback's meal
28 "The Name of the Rose" author
30 Quantity of gossip
31 Thailand neighbor
34 Woodwinds of jazz, for short
36 podicia
37 Nabokov novel
38 POW possibly
39 Possessive pronoun
40 Decumbers
42 Baseball et al.
44 Withered
45 Good-luck charm
47 Bologna one
48 Ivan or Alexander, e.g.
49 Reader's cards
51 Roofing goop
53 Patron
55 China, Japan, et al.
59 Ages and ages and ages
60 Predatory
61 joust?
62 Bundle of cotton
63 Lacking sense
64 Sit-com equine
65 Ex-superpower's letters
66 Worked on lawn borders
67 Old adages

DOWN
1 File flaps
2 Vicinity
3 Penurser
4 Body of prey
5 Broadway hits
6 Oursion
7 Wagon
8 Singer Delta
9 Prickly plants
10 One of O.J.'s lawyers
11 Nagging insects?
12 Car
13 Birdhouse
14 nestier
15 Pas' mates
16 Guido's note
17 Fend
18 Warning
19 Gymnast
20 Comaneci
21 Amphibian
22 perches?
23 Brucac
24 Beyond pret.
25 SDI weapon
26 Bring in money
27 Image recorder
28 Informer
29 Amounted to
30 Creeks
31 Surgery rms.
32 Prevailing tide
33 Exist
34 "The Thief of Baghdad" co-star
35 Little round
36 legumes
37 Temple
38 Bay of the Taj
39 Mahal
40 Offed, once
41 Mack and Knight
42 Comic's bit

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

PUTIL
RABDN
TUNBOY
GNOBLE

Print answer here: HE

Yesterday's Jumble: IDIOT FAULT ABLAZE ZEALOT
Answer: This happened when he tried to drink a case of soda — HE "FIZZED" OUT

Business

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EDITORS

The Business

Major Currencies & Prices	USD	NEW	1998
British	1.5462	1.5462	1.5462
French	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
German	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Italian	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Japanese	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Swiss	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Canadian	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Australian	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
South African	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Indian	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Chinese	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Thai	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Malaysian	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Singapore	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Philippine	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Indonesian	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Thai Baht	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Malaysian Ringgit	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Singapore Dollar	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Philippine Peso	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Indonesian Rupiah	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Thai Baht	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Malaysian Ringgit	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
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Philippine Peso	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Indonesian Rupiah	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
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Singapore Dollar	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Philippine Peso	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Indonesian Rupiah	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
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Malaysian Ringgit	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Singapore Dollar	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Philippine Peso	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Indonesian Rupiah	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
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Indonesian Rupiah	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Thai Baht	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Malaysian Ringgit	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Singapore Dollar	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Philippine Peso	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Indonesian Rupiah	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Thai Baht	1.6399	1.6399	1.6399
Malaysian Ringgit	1.6399	1.6399	1.6

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Ministry of Finance will be fully responsible for all food subsidies

**** THE MINISTRY** of Finance will take over all the operations of providing food subsidies from the Ministry of Supply, an official source has stressed. He indicated that the finance people will be subsidizing sugar, rice and milk in addition to the bread subsidy which was previously handled by the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Supply has previously handled the subsidies for the

sugar, rice and milk.

The official source said the government's new objective aims at limiting the subsidies to one ministry to save citizens time and to better control and organize the subsidy distribution process. He added that the mechanism of the distribution will remain the same and the change will only be in having a new ministry supervising the subsidies (Al Aswaq).

Government allocates extra funds for road maintenance during 1998

**** THE GOVERNMENT** has allocated JD14 million for road maintenance this year, JD2 million more than the amount set aside in 1997. The Ministry of Public Works and Housing has informed the Jordanian Road Society that the Council of Ministers has decided to set up a special fund for road maintenance. The fund, from the public and private sectors, will manage around JD75

million to be collected from various fees and taxes to maintain roads.

According to Abdul Fattah Touqan, president of the society, the Kingdom's road network stretches about 7,500 kilometres built at a cost of around JD2 billion. He indicated that in 1950 the road network was only 895 kilometres (Al Dustour).

Association of Banks adds new names to list of those whose cheques keep bouncing

**** THE ASSOCIATION** of Banks in Jordan has provided its members with the names of 793 persons who wrote cheques without having sufficient funds in their accounts during 1997. Of these names, three were listed for misusing their credit cards. According to the association's 1997 annual report, the list of those whose cheques repeatedly bounced

includes 5,194 names compared to 4,576 names in 1996.

The association refuses to reveal to the persons concerned the name of the bank which reported their actions. Furthermore, the association has started to list the names of persons who are taken to courts for not settling the Visa bills (Al Aswaq).

Government draft law to supervise saving funds creates uproar among private sector employees

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Plans by the government to supervise saving funds belonging to over 150,000 private sector companies has generated heavy criticism from firms who are threatening to close them down. The draft law, proposed by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ), has also enraged employees who hold over JD 250 million in such funds — mainly from monthly salary cuts and funds held by firms to help guarantee a better future for their staff.

Under the draft legislation, which has not been endorsed by the cabinet, all saving funds will be placed under a "custodian bank" that will be named by the government.

The main features of the draft law were discussed during a meeting on March 1 between the CBJ, representatives of more than 100 saving funds and a gov-

ernmental committee, company officials told the Jordan Times.

The proposed law, drafted by a seven-man team led by CBJ senior official Mohammad Sa'ed Shahin, includes several points that were viewed by opponents as "discouraging saving process in the country and endangering the interest of more than 150,000 private sector employees."

The committee includes representatives from CBJ, the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Finance and independent lawyers.

A key controversial point in the draft law stipulates that employees' savings will be subjected to income tax while the prevailing system exempted them from such a tax.

The proposed law also suggests that loans taken from the saving fund should be repaid in less than two years, while the present law sets no time limit for repaying back such loans.

It also hampers employ-

ees from withdrawing their savings until they reach the retirement age — 55 for women and 60 for men.

The draft law calls for establishing a committee, headed by a director, to supervise the new fund whose expenses will be shouldered by the employees' savings.

It also calls for deducting 30 per cent of the savings in income tax if a member decides to withdraw his/her money before reaching retirement age.

"The new draft law will harm the savings of thousands of employees in the country. It also contradicts the country's privatisation trend," said Yassin Kayed, deputy director of the Al Quds Insurance Company.

He told the Jordan Times that Mr. Shahin told the March 1 gathering that the draft law was in line with "instructions from the International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation (WTO)."

Jordan, negotiating to join the Geneva-based WTO, launched IMF-agreed economic reforms in 1989 following a financial crunch.

Mr. Shahin told us that this draft law is a follow up to the economic restructuring programme laid down by the world financial institutions. Mr. Kayed added.

But Arabic daily Al Ra'i newspaper quoted CBJ Governor Ziad Fariz as saying Wednesday that the new draft law was proposed to safeguard these savings from mismanagement.

He was apparently referring to an ongoing investigation into alleged embezzlement at a savings fund run by the Medical Association.

"The draft law was prepared to organise investments of these saving funds and shield them from dangers," Dr. Fariz said.

Dr. Fariz denied that the draft law was in response to demands by international monetary

institutions, but said the government "had benefited from world experts to formulate the draft law."

He stressed the proposed legislation will be "subjected to debate" by the general assemblies of saving funds across Jordan "before it is sent to the Council of Ministers (for approval)."

The new law will only take effect after parliament endorses it and His Majesty King Hussein issues a Royal Decree enacting it.

"The CBJ will not be the party to maintain control over these funds... A committee will supervise them," Dr. Fariz added.

Many companies said they were seriously considering plans to dissolve their funds to safeguard the interests of their employees.

"The proposed draft law is unacceptable," said Jameel Wreikat, a senior official at the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC), partly owned by the government.

"And if the government insists on enacting the law, I think we will have no option but to dissolve the JPMC fund, which holds JD7 million," added Mr. Wreikat.

He said saving funds were "voluntarily-run" by workers and employees.

"The draft law will add more expenses to run the new fund which will be deducted from savings of members," Mr. Wreikat said.

"We receive telephone calls every minute from our employees requesting their savings back. Everybody is frightened from the proposed law," Mr. Wreikat added.

Hisham Muslamani, in charge of the Jordan Potash Company (JPC) saving fund, said "the new law contradicts the present law in letter and spirit."

"Our employees are allowed to withdraw their savings after five years of work with the company. This matter will come to an end and their ability to take loans from the fund will be restricted," said Mr. Muslamani.

He said many employees wanted to get their savings back because of fear that the "government will put its grip on their savings."

Other spokesmen for private firms who were contacted by the Jordan Times said that general assemblies of their saving funds were expected to hold meetings to discuss the draft law.

"The general trend in these firms is that if the government insisted on its plan, then the best thing to do will be to dissolve the saving funds and give the money back to the employees," added Mr. Kayed.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	10/03/98 19:41
US Dollar	1.0000	1.3306	0.6101	1.4805	127.66	1.4140
DE Mark	0.5462	1.0000	0.3331	0.8141	98.73	0.7723
GB Sterling	1.6390	3.0018	1.0000	2.4414	209.13	2.3175
CH Franc	0.6708	1.2274	0.4088	1.0000	95.83	0.9478
JP Yen	0.0078	1.4331	0.4775	1.1668	1.0000	1.1069
CA Dollar	0.7072	1.2905	0.4301	1.0486	126.66	1.4643
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0105	0.3383	0.8227	161.63	0.7845
NL Guilder	0.4890	88.71	0.2996	72.23	81.82	0.6890
FR Franc	0.1630	0.2978	0.0992	24.2615	20.76	0.2301

Middle Eastern Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	10/03/98 19:41
US Dollar	1.0000	1.3306	0.6101	1.4805	127.66	1.4140
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	0.7080	0.3770	0.3640	3.6728	1.5200
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1890	0.1005	0.097	0.0816	0.98
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8806	0.9486	0.97	0.8106	9.74
Qatar Dinar	0.2746	0.1947	0.1001	0.1001	0.0893	1.01
Kuwait Dinar	3.2728	2.3204	1.2749	1.2338	11.92	12.02
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	0.1022	0.0813	0.0832	0.91
Lebanese 1000	0.85	0.6440	0.2466	0.2467	2.3829	0.2000
Egyptian	0.2930	0.2078	0.1091	0.1105	1.0670	0.0895

Energy

Commodity	Price
Brent	12.34
WTI	12.24
Bonny	12.34
Dubai	10.71
UL Gas	143.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	10/03/98 19:41
US Dollar	1.0000	1.3306	0.6101	1.4805	127.66	1.4140
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.1890	0.1005	0.097	0.0816	0.98
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.1930	0.1022	0.0813	0.0832	0.91
KW Dinar	3.2728	2.3204	1.2749	1.2338	11.92	12.02
BH Dinar	0.3770	0.2807	0.1583	0.1583	3.6567	3.3888
CY Pound	1.8644	1.3408	0.7008	0.7008	2.7768	2.3781

JOD Cross Rates

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.1881	1.1893
DE Mark	0.3872	0.3891
CH Franc	0.4768	0.478
FR Franc	0.1155	0.1161
JP Yen	0.5565	0.5583
NL Guilder	0.3436	0.3453
IT Lira	0.3835	0.3855

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)

Period	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
1 Month	5.68	5.66	5.59	6.63	6.68
3 Months	7.25	7.24	7.40	7.25	7.25
6 Months	8.50	8.49	8.52	8.68	8.68
1 Year	9.50	9.49	9.58	9.38	9.38
2 Year	10.50	10.49	10.58	10.38	10.38
3 Year	11.50	11.49	11.58	11.38	11.38
4 Year	12.50	12.49	12.58	12.38	12.38
5 Year	13.50	13.49	13.58	13.38	13.38

Main Equity Indices

Index	Value	Change
New York	8098.28	29.15
DOW JONES	8098.28	29.15
S&P 500	1058.3	4.48
FT-SE 100	6828.1	9.2
Nikkei 225	16982.82	10.29
CAC 40	3621.51	4.34
DAX	4834.43	8.6

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHARISAT
TELEPHONE: 60711 / 60719
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 11/03/1998

	PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	QIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
	346,000	250,000	ARAB BANK	15.6	1.18	2	40	13580	340.00	339.50	-0.50
	2,340	1,680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	2	0.00	10	2550	4514	1.78	1.77	-0.01
	1,890	890	MID. EAST INV. SEC.	67.0	0.00	8	40000	40800	1.03	1.02	-0.01
	2,680	1,650	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	6.03	0.00	20	11150	19262	1.71	1.71	0.00
	5,300	4,610	THE HOUSING BK.	29.8	1.95	9	13510	67539	5.00	4.98	-0.02
	4,180	1,820	JOR. KOWATY BANK	10.1	0.00	9	3650	6935	1.90	1.90	0.00
	1,020	400	JOR. GULF BANK	10.14	0.00	1	4000	207	7.71	7.69	-0.02
	4,020	1,990	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	10.3	4.73	5	2200	4477	2.03	2.03	0.00
	2,350	1,630	JOR. INV. FIN. BANK/NEW	2	0.00	4	1500	2585	1.71	1.72	+0.01
	1,500	800	BEIT AL-MAL (BEITNA)	6	15.63	18	15500	14726	0.96	0.96	0.00
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 236.02 %CHG: -0.18 86 90400 174624											
	2,300	1,200	HOLY LAND INSUR.	6.4	0.00	1	2000	2480	1.31	1.24	-0.07
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 123.04 %CHG: -0.21 1 2000 2480											
	2,140	1,550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.9	4.85	20	8276	17058	2.08	2.06	-0.02
	4,850	2,450	MINERALS	55.8	0.00	5	257	1258	4.85	5.08	+0.23
	1,850	930	WATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	16	11425	12808	1.10	1.14	+0.04
	590	370	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	20.0	0.00	3	2500	975	3.38	3.39	+0.01
	9,350	6,700	ALFA X	9.4	8.49	3	1100	10175	9.30	9.25	-0.05
	4,600	2,890	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	11.0	1.81	10	3750	16335	4.30	4.43	+0.13
	1,090	900	SARSA EDUCATION	9	0.00	4	2500	2390	0.95	0.96	+0.01
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 121.34 %CHG: +0.63 61 29808 60999											
	4,450	2,690	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	19.9	3.73	18	3927	11364	2.87	2.95	+0.08
	7,050	5,620	ARAB POTASH CO.	15.1	3.09	2	109	676	6.35	6.20	-0.15
	11,160	9,200	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.4	8.31	3	52	556	10.70	10.70	0.00
	2,490	1,250	INDUSTRIAL CON. AG.	9	0.00	3	113	342	1.27	1.27	0.00
	5,700	3,440	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	14.8	3.72	30	9438	50477	5.25	5.37	+0.12
	7,200	2,200	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	4.3	4.76	2	600	1260	2.20	2.10	-0.10
	1,420	770	RAPIA INDUSTRIES	9	0.00	21	9950	8352	0.82	0.86	+0.04
	6,350	4,400	DAR ALDAWA OV. INV.	15.3	3.99	8	2350	14669	6.20	6.26	+0.06
	600	400	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	10.6	0.00	35	37300	18518	0.49	0.50	+0.01
	1,140	660	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	4	1250	850	0.68	0.68	0.00
	540	510	NATIONAL INDUS.	9	0.00	4	2500	1425	0.56	0.57	+0.01
	990	370	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	14	10000	4398	0.43	0.45	+0.02
	750	500	JOR. ROCKWELL INDUS.	9	0.00	2	1000	565	0.56	0.57	+0.01
	2,320	1,380	UNIV. CHEM. INDUS.	14.4	6.25	8	1250	1990	1.55	1.60	+0.05
	1,500	920	NATL. CABLE WIRE. HPC	29.6	0.00	40	38800	46714	1.17	1.23	+0.06
	1,560	1,150	JOR. SULPHUR CO.	9	0.00	17	7900	4902	0.61	0.63	+0.02
	1,480	920	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	17.7	5.04	6	2450	3406	1.39	1.39	0.00
	1,410	690	UNIV. HOUS. INDUS.	9	0.00	4	1250	1425	0.56	0.57	+0.01
	1,410	690	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	10.9	12.35	20	19500	15542	0.79	0.81	+0.02
	1,620	1,350	NATL. CELORINE	14.2	4.64	1	1000	1510	1.51	1.51	0.00
	1,030	810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	18.9	0.00	41	31150	33588	1.01	1.03	+0.02
	1,880	1,290	EL - ZAY READY WEAR	49.6	0.00	4	2250	3153	1.36	1.42	+0.05
	1,250	1,080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.6	0.00	14	6950	4498	1.19	1.20	+0.01
	860	720	WELCO CH. VEG.	10.0	0.00	10	3050	3343	1.11	1.10	-0.01
	850	660	JORDAN STEEL	35.7	6.33	31	31550	24927	0.79	0.79	0.00
	840	570	MID. EAST COMPLEX	7.9	15.63	14	32550	20918	0.64	0.64	0.00
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 115.52 %CHG: -0.43 393 280727 303244											
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 171.05 %CHG: -0.22 541 402935 541347											
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 11/03/1998											
	N 1.050	.910	REPORT & P.M. MKX.75X	17.8	0.00	1	2000	1420	.96	.96	-
	.530	.340	JOR. TRADE F.A.	10.4	0.00	14	23700	9243	.39	.39	-
	.660	.480	NATL. CONCRETE CENTERS	8	0.00	5	2453	1534	.60	.63	+0.03
	.560	.400	DRUM INV. CO.	15.0	0.00	8	3473	3473	.73	.73	0.00
	.620	.360	ARAB FIB. INVEST.	9	0.00	11	14450	6358	.45	.44	-0.01
	N 1.000	.720	AL-SHARG INV. CO.	17.0	0.00	5	18350	17633	.94	.97	+0.03
	1.000	.700	ARAB JOR. SEC. CO.	10.0	1.00	1	10000	10000	1.00	1.00	0.00
	.470	.240	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	35.7	0.00	42	104900	31767	.32	.31	-0.01
	.750	.360	NATL. MINT. ENG. MARICO	9	0.00	22	56800	22142	.39	.40	+0.01
	.690	.580	KIDSADE PHARM. 90X	8	0.00	5	4000	2000	.66	.65	-0.01
	1.800	1.860	UNION TOBACCO 75X	10.0	0.00	1	350	420	1.45	1.45	0.00
	.730	.550	RAZI PHARM.	8	0.00	6	2229	1580	.72	.71	-0.01
	.480	.240	INDUS. ENG.	9	0.00	9	17850	4998	.27	.28	+0.01
	.510	.330	INDUS. CERAMIC	14.2	0.00	5	2355	12609	.64	.64	0.00
	N .950	.550	ADVANCED PHARM. 2ND.	9	0.00	19	24124	15439	.64	.64	0.00
	.740	.490	NATL. POULTRY	8	0.00	6	10550	5697	.55	.54	-0.01
	N .470	.250	OPTICAL WEARING 75X	10.0	0.00	1	1000	1000	1.00	1.00	0.00
	N 1.000	.660	WEL ALUMINUM. 75X	94.6	0.00	12	16550	7117	.67	.68	+0.01
	N 1.100	.720	ARAB INT. FOOD FACT.	54.9	0.00	1	1000	1000	1.01	1.00	-0.01
	N 1.000	.750	KIDSA PRINT CO. 75X	8	0.00	2	1750	1105	.89	.88	-0.01

Tyson launches second suit against former managers

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Mike Tyson, boxing's cash cow who reportedly is on the verge of financial ruin, has lodged a \$100 million law suit here against his former managers John Home and Rory Holloway for allegedly cheating him.

Tyson's action against the duo mirrors last week's action in New York when he sued his longtime promoter Don King for more than \$100 million for allegedly cheating him of millions.

The 31-year-old former world heavyweight champion holds Home and Holloway responsible for persuading him in 1992 while he was in prison, serving a five year sentence for rape of which he completed three years before being released on parole, to hand over exclusive rights to King.

He claims he lost millions of dollars and that he had not realised that the agreement handed his two managers 20 per cent of his earnings while King received 30 per cent.

Tyson, who has completely re-organized his professional life in the last month



Mike Tyson

alleged in his suit against the extravagantly hair-styled King that the promoter has

cheated him out of millions of dollars since 1986. Reportedly facing a \$7

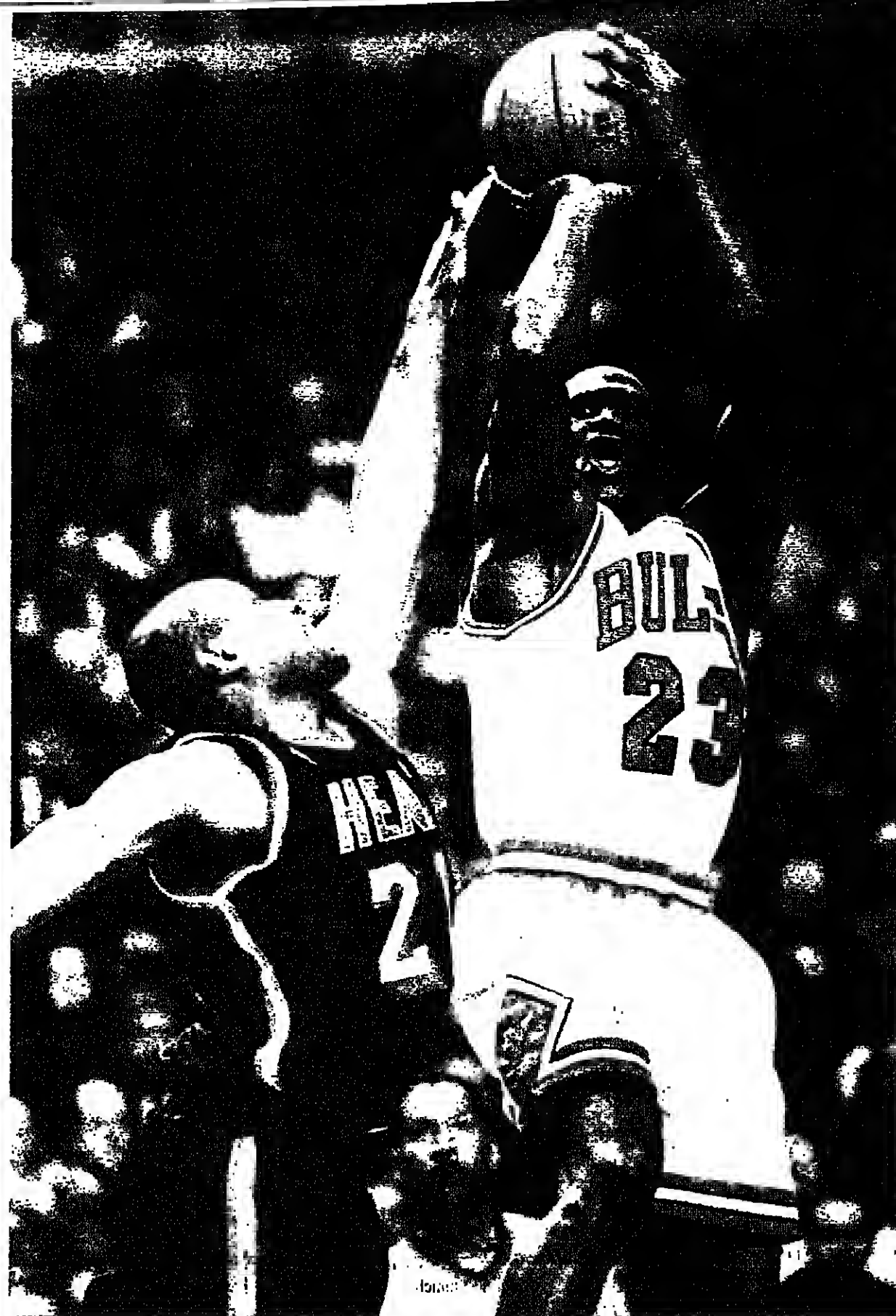
million tax payment, Tyson recently formed Mike Tyson Enterprises and hired entertainment lawyer Jerry Wald. He has established ties to longtime manager Shelly Finkel and reportedly has contacted retired basketball superstar Magic Johnson in an advisory capacity.

Currently suspended for biting the ears of champion Evander Holyfield in a heavyweight title bout last summer, Tyson is scheduled to make an appearance at Wrestlemania on March 29 and has appeared on World Wrestling Federation telecasts in the last month.

He reportedly is receiving \$3 million for his association with the WWF.

While Tyson has said that he is not broke, the suit alleges that King has defrauded the former champion of more than 100 million accumulated over his star-crossed career.

Tyson became the youngest heavyweight champion in history at the age of 20 when he knocked out Trevor Berbick in the second round of a World Boxing Council title fight on November 22, 1986.



Chicago Bulls' Michael Jordan gets a shot off over Miami Heats' Vashon Lenard during the first period of their NBA game at the United Centre (Reuters photo)

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Argentina beat Bulgaria 2-0

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — Gabriel Batistuta celebrated his recall to the Argentina side by opening the scoring in a 2-0 win over Bulgaria in a World Cup warm-up match here Tuesday. Claudio Lopez, who plays for Valencia in Spain, got the second four minutes from time against a Bulgarian side reduced to 10 men from the 72nd minute when Emil Kostadinov was sent off by Uruguayan referee Gustavo Mendez for a bad foul on Argentina's Napoli defender Roberto Ayala. The 28-year-old Batistuta, who set an Italian Serie A record scoring 26 goals for Fiorentina in 1995, had been out of favour with Argentina national coach Daniel Passarella for the last year. Argentina have been drawn in Group H for France 98 with World Cup newcomers Japan, Jamaica and Croatia. Bulgaria are in Group D with Spain, Nigeria and Paraguay.

Bordeaux scrape through to final

BORDEAUX (AFP) — Bordeaux scraped through to the French League Cup final 4-2 on penalties over Auxerre here on Tuesday after the match ended 1-1 after extra time — they will play either Paris Saint Germain or Lens, who play on Thursday, in the final. In a scrappy four match Bordeaux took the lead in the 98th minute with a superb 25 yard freekick by Brazilian defender Paulo Sergio Gralak, only for Auxerre to level four minutes later through French international Bernard Diomede. The 28-year-old Gralak's effort beat the despairing dive of 'keeper Lionel Charbonnier in his right hand corner while Diomede, who had had a quiet match by his standards up till then, got free inside the area controlled the ball and nodded the ball past Ullrich Rame with his left foot.

Villa sign Chilean star

SANTIAGO (AFP) — English Premiership side Aston Villa are set to sign Chilean international midfielder Jose Luis Sierra for \$2 million it was announced here on Tuesday. The 29-year-old Colo Colo playmaker, who impressed during Chile's 2-0 win over fellow World Cup finalists England in last month's friendly particularly the 20 yard pass that set up Marcelo Salas's first goal, said it was an opportunity he could not refuse. "I am delighted and at my age it is unlikely I would receive another offer like that," Sierra said.

Italian minister pushes ahead with anti-foreigner plan

ROME (AFP) — Italy's Deputy Prime Minister Walter Veltroni claimed on Tuesday he was gathering European support for his bid to slash the number of foreign players in national championships.

Laws on the free circulation of workers means that soccer clubs in the European Union can currently recruit as many EU nationals as they wish, plus several non-EU players up to five in the Serie A.

Veltroni is lobbying to have a maximum of five foreigners per club, whatever their country of origin, and claims that his wish to defend his national footballing culture is shared by ministers elsewhere in the EU.

"It's not going to be easy, but it's the road to follow," he said on Tuesday.

The deputy premier said he would meet EU commission president Jacques Santer, along with three key commissioners — Marcelino Oreja (sport), Karel Van Miert (competition) and Pádraig Flynn (social affairs) — to discuss his proposal in Brussels in early April.

Veltroni, who is also Italy's sports and culture minister, added: "I will be in Paris next week to discuss our new cultural initiatives and during that time I will be meeting the French sports minister (Marie-George Buffet), who has already agreed with our proposal for a limit of five foreigners."

"So it could work... and I want at least to have my conscience clear by trying to see this through to the end, in the interest of young players."

In Italy, Veltroni enjoys the unqualified support of every interest group in the game — federation, coaches, players union and League.

All are anxious to avoid a situation where young Italians have no chance of making the grade in the Serie A because of competition from foreign imports, now estimated at anywhere between 120 to 140.

Only six Serie A clubs — all of whom are lying in or around the relegation zone — currently have five foreigners or less: Piacenza, who operate an Italians-only policy, Vicenza, Empoli, Atalanta, Bologna and Napoli.

NBA STANDINGS

WASHINGTON (AFP) — National Basketball Association results and standings after Tuesday's games.

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	Gb
Miami	43	20	.683	-
New York	35	26	.574	7
New Jersey	33	30	.524	10
Washington	33	30	.524	10
Orlando	32	30	.516	10 1/2
Boston	29	32	.475	13
Philadelphia	21	39	.350	20 1/2

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	Gb
Chicago	46	16	.742	-
Indiana	43	18	.705	2 1/2
Charlotte	38	23	.623	7 1/2
Atlanta	36	24	.600	9
Cleveland	32	29	.525	13 1/2
Milwaukee	29	31	.483	16

Detroit	27	34	.443	18 1/2
Toronto	13	48	.213	32 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Midwest Division

	W	L	Pct	Gb
Utah	44	16	.733	-
San Antonio	42	20	.677	3
Minnesota	32	29	.525	12 1/2
Houston	31	31	.500	14
Vancouver	15	45	.250	29
Dallas	13	49	.210	32
Denver	5	58	.079	40 1/2

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	Gb
Seattle	47	15	.758	-
LA Lakers	42	18	.700	4
Phoenix	41	21	.664	6
Portland	34	25	.576	11 1/2
Sacramento	26	37	.413	21 1/2
Golden State	14	47	.230	32 1/2
LA Clippers	13	48	.213	33 1/2

England sets out its case for 2006 — welcoming the world of football to the home of football

PROFESSIONALISM and passion are the cornerstones of England's bid to host the World Cup in 2006 and are set out in a brochure published by England's campaign. The case emphasises the unrivalled and modern facilities in English football, the unique atmosphere at top stadiums and the extensive experience in running a major tournament combined with England's strong history and tradition in the game.

Key components of the case set out in the brochure are:

• England is the home of football and the birthplace of the modern game. It is the country fans from all over the world

want to visit and where many international stars have chosen to play and live;

• EURO 96 was an outstanding success. England proved it can stage a major international tournament. It was trouble free, well organised and had a great atmosphere;

• England's grounds are now the finest in the world with around £600 million having been spent on them in recent years. They have excellent facilities and are also world famous footballing shrines for millions of fans;

• Wembley — the Venue of Legends — is about to be rebuilt at a cost of £220 million and will be the finest

modern football stadium in the world. It is the venue where every great footballer wants to play;

• The grounds create a unique atmosphere as there are no fences and the crowd is close to the action, playing an important part in the game;

• England is high on the list of international tourist destinations. Visitors can move around the country easily and take in historical, cultural and shopping visits along the way.

The campaign has the full backing of the Prime Minister Tony Blair and his government and major British businesses are preparing to endorse the bid.

Sir Bobby Charlton CBE, Geoff

Hurst MBE and Gary Lineker OBE have been signed up as ambassadors for the campaign and thousands of football fans in England and abroad have already backed the bid.

Commenting on the launch of the brochure Alec McGivran, Director of the World Cup 2006 campaign, said: "There has never been a better time for England to bid for the World Cup. English football is once again a good news story. Support is at an all time high, with more than 22 million people watching League football every season and over 130 international stars playing in the FA Premier League.

"It is the combination of profession-

alism and passion that best sums up what England can give to the World Cup. We have top quality grounds, including, soon, a new state of the art national stadium, and match organisation and security second to none. Coming from the home of football, this bid is unique.

"Our aim is to inform the world of football of the excellence behind our bid. We acknowledge the highly competitive nature of the campaign but, FIFA, we want what is best for football and for football to be the winner. That means choosing the best country to stage football's biggest event. We are sure that the many strengths of English

football, on and off the pitch, will make our bid the best in the world."

Prime Minister Blair, writing in the brochure, said: "Britain approaches the Millennium with a renewed sense of purpose, and with high hopes for the future. I believe that our country has the vision, the enthusiasm and the commitment to host an excellent World Cup in 2006.

Our commitment to sport is unrivalled. Since 1990 we have invested, as a nation, over £1.8 billion in facilities, with a host of bold initiatives still to come. The government therefore supports England's World Cup bid wholeheartedly."

TODAY AT

PHILADELPHIA '1'

Demi Moore ... in
G.I. JANE

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15,
8:30, 10:30

PHILADELPHIA '2'

Pierce Brosnan as
James Bond... in
007...TOMORROW

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15,
8:30, 10:30

PLAZA

The biggest cinema production
TITANIC

Shows: 3:00, 7:00, 10:30 p.m.
**I KNOW WHAT YOU
DID LAST SUMMER**
Shows: 12:30 p.m.

CONCORD

Adel Imam & Yusra ... in
RISALA ILA AL WALI
(ARABIC)

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:15, 10:30
TITANIC SHOWS 9:30 P.M.
LONG KISS GOODNIGHT
Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

GALLERIA 2

ABDOUN
GRAND OPENING

TITANIC
Shows: 5:15, 8:45
The film is also on at 2:00 p.m. on
Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays

GALLERIA 1

ABDOUN
GRAND OPENING

TITANIC
Shows: 5:15, 8:45
The film is also on at 2:00 p.m. on
Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays

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Royals shortstop Felix Mar
fruit League exhibition game

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100	Miami
97	Dallas
95	Milwaukee
79	New Jersey
109	Denver
111	Toronto

Cup
Cumbria USA by Mark Hargreaves
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New York Yankees center-fielder Donzell McDonald slides safely into second as Kansas City Royals shortstop Felix Martinez (top) tries to make the play during their Grapefruit League exhibition game at the Baseball City complex (Reuters photo)

Egypt seek historic club treble

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Egypt are well positioned to create history by becoming the first country to win the three African club competitions in the same year.

Al Ahli, back after a self-imposed, four-year exile, look the team to beat in the Champions League, Ismailia rank among the Cup Winners Cup favourites and Zamalek stand out in the CAF Cup field.

Should the trio triumph, Egypt would be the undisputed continental football power as they already hold the Nations Cup and junior championship trophies.

Hossam Hassan, leading Nations Cup scorer with South African sensation Benni McCarthy, spearheads the Al Ahli attack and twin brother Ibrahim operates in defence.

Opponents Coffee of Ethiopia, who slammed eight goals past Saint Michel United from the Seychelles in a preliminary tie, will find scoring far more difficult in Addis Ababa on March 22.

With 13 titles since 1984, North African clubs are expected to dominate a competition given a facelift last year with the introduction of prize money while the quarter and semi-finals were scrapped in favour of mini-leagues.

Holders Raja Casablanca of Morocco launch their defence at modest Mogas 90 of Benin. Etoile du Sahel of Tunisia visit Kamsar of Guinea and Algerian outfit CS Constantine face Douanes in Senegal.

Former African champions Esperance of Tunisia and Wydad Casablanca and USMA of Algeria and Ismailia could reach the Cup Winners Cup semi-finals if they dodge each other in preceding rounds.

Esperance host Stade Malien of Mali, USMA entertain Hawks of Gambia, Ismailia confront Red Sea of Eritrea and Wydad received a bye when Senegal withdrew.

Zamalek, whose line-up includes outstanding goalkeeper Nader al-Sayed and defender Medhat Hady, who shackled McCarthy in the Nations Cup final, make their CAF Cup debut in Kenya against Gor Mahia.

Sampras cruises; Kafelnikov, Chang out of Champions Cup

INDIAN WELLS (AFP) — Pete Sampras, in his 100th straight week atop the world rankings, cruised into the third round of the Champions Cup Tuesday with a straight-set victory over Todd Martin.

Sampras served 16 aces, including three in the final game of the 6-1, 7-5 victory to line up a third-round clash with former World No. 1 Thomas Muster of Austria, who beat 15th-seeded Frenchman Cedric Pioline 4-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Australia's U.S. Open champion Pat Rafter, the third seed, had to fight a little harder for a 7-5, 5-7, 6-4 victory over South African Wayne Ferreira.

And fourth-seeded Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov fell at his first hurdle, losing in straight sets to Czech Bohdan Ulihrach 6-3, 6-3.

Ulihrach is the same player who stopped Sampras in the second round here last year en route to a runner-up finish to Michael Chang.

Chang, the eighth seed, withdrew on Tuesday night before playing a match with a sprained left knee suffered in practice last week.

That made Sampras' task of regaining the title he won in 1994 and 1995 look just a little easier.

Since those two wins, Sampras has lost in the quarters and the second round here.

This year, he came early to adjust to the thin desert air, and changed the strings on his racquet to improve his control.

"I string my racquets very tight, very thin gut," he said. "The last couple of years, the ball really seems to fly here. This year I'm using kind of a thicker gauge ... got here a little early on Friday to get used to the conditions. It was very frustrating losing here so early the way I played against Ulihrach last year."

Sampras had little trouble from Martin. His lone poor service game yielded Martin's only break, in the fourth game of the second set. That put the set back on serve, after Sampras broke Martin in the opening game.

"He hit a couple of good returns, I double faulted," Sampras said of that game. "He seemed to put his game together at that point. But even though he broke me back, I still felt like I was hitting the ball well, I was controlling the points. I felt really, really good, really confident out there."

Rafter just felt relieved. "I can't recall serving that badly in the first two sets," he said. "That's as



Pete Sampras



Yevgeny Kafelnikov

badly as I ever served. I wasn't volleying that great, returning, no. I've returned a lot better than that.

"From the ground it was OK, that's not where I win my points. I think all my strengths were just a little bit off at the moment."

If Rafter was relieved, Ulihrach was plain surprised by the easy time he had against Kafelnikov.

The Russian World No. 4 had a slim chance of challenging Sampras for the World No. 1 ranking in the weeks to come, since he had no points to defend after missing the first three months of last year with a broken finger.

"Of course I was surprised," Ulihrach said. "He's in big shape, he has good chance to become No

1, he won in London two weeks ago."

After playing in Doha in January, Ulihrach was laid out with a virus for three weeks. His two match wins here have already doubled his total for the year, but he virtually ended Kafelnikov's chances of catching Sampras.

"I was playing unbelievable from beginning to end," he said. "The conditions were perfect, sunny, no wind, no shadows. It was fantastic."

Second-round action continues, with Australian Open champion Petr Korda, the second seed, opening his campaign against Australian Scott Draper in the night session.

Unseeded Andre Agassi, fresh from a win in Scottsdale, will meet Spain's Sergi Bruguera in the second round, while Ecuadorian lucky loser Nicolas Lapentti will step in for Chang and take on Zimbabwe's Wayne Black.

SCOREBOARD

NBA
New York 105
Chicago 106
Houston 97
Washington 93
San Antonio 79
Phoenix 79
Seattle 79

Champions Cup

Jan-Michael Gambill (USA) vs Mark Philippoussis (Aus) 12-7, 6-6 (7/7), 5-7, 7-6 (8/6)
Slava Dosedel (Cze) vs Alberto Berasategui (Spa) 16-12, 6-4, 1-0 ret.
Thomas Enqvist (Swe) vs Rikard Lindberg (USA) 6-3, 6-1
Carlos Moya (Spa) vs Grant Stafford (RSA) 6-2, 6-3
Vince Spadea (USA) vs Albert Viloca (Spa) 6-4, 6-1

Tommy Haas (GER) vs Jason Stoltenberg (Aus) 6-3, 3-6, 6-1
Hendrik Dreckmann (GER) vs Leon Hewitt (Aus) 6-4, 6-4
Wayne Black (Zim) vs Tim Henman (GB) 6-3, 6-4
Scott Draper (Aus) vs Andrea Gaudenzi (ITA) 6-2, 6-3

2nd rd
Pete Sampras (USA) vs Todd Martin (USA) 6-1, 7-5
Pat Rafter (Aus) vs Wayne Ferreira (RSA) 7-5, 5-7, 6-4

Bohdan Ulihrach (Cze) vs Yevgeny Kafelnikov (Rus) 6-3, 6-3
Thomas Muster (Aus) vs Cedric Pioline (FRA) 4-6, 6-3, 6-4
Nicolas Pietrangeli (GER) vs Mark van Winckel (USA) 6-3, 6-4

Evert Cup
3rd rd
Lindsay Davenport (USA) vs Rikard Lindberg (SWE) 6-2, 6-2
Joanette Kruger (RSA) vs Amanda Coetzer (RSA) 2-6, 6-4, 6-4

Conchita Martinez (Spa) vs Anna Kournikova (Rus) 6-3, 6-4
Venus Williams (USA) vs Dominique van Rooy (RSA) 6-4, 6-1

Quarter-finals
Steffi Graf (GER) vs Natasha Zvereva (BLR) 6-3, 6-0

French League Cup: Semi-finals
Bordeaux 1-0
Bordeaux won 4-2 on penalties

Copenhagen ATP event
Martin Sinner (GER) vs Martin Damm (CZE) 4-6, 7-6 (15/14), 6-4
Diego Nargiso (ITA) vs Andrei Panatta (ITA) 7-5, 6-4

Andre Pavel (ROM) vs Marc Rosset (SWE) 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/6)
David Prinosil (GER) vs Christian Yankov (GER) 7-5, 6-3

Kenneth Carlsen (DEN) vs Jacobo Diaz (Spa) 6-1, 6-1
Gianluca Pozzi (ITA) vs Andrei Panatta (ITA) 6-4, 6-3

Thomas Kellola (FIN) vs Rikard Lindberg (SWE) 7-5, 2-6, 6-3
Brett Steven (NZL) vs Jens Knippenberg (GER) 6-4, 6-0

Beckenbauer swings behind Trapattoni

MUNICH (AFP) — Bayern Munich's Italian coach Giovanni Trapattoni's attack on several of the club's stars received unequivocal support from club president Franz Beckenbauer here on Tuesday — hours after the former German national coach had criticised him for being soft on the players.

The 52-year-old Beckenbauer, who won the 1974 World Cup as a player and coached Germany to the 1990 title, said that the Italian was completely justified in delivering his astonishingly brutal attack.

"He (Trapattoni) has my support 100 per cent. He is completely right to criticise the players," Beckenbauer said.

Trapattoni, who is currently in his second spell at the club and won the championship last season, exploded at a pre-training press conference when he was informed that Beckenbauer had said he was too nice and should be harder with the players.

Trapattoni, who is the most successful Italian club coach of all time having coached Juventus to the 1977 UEFA Cup, the 1984 Cup Winners' Cup and the 1985 European Cup to add to seven league titles, also laid into three of his players 'Super' Mario Basler, Mehmet Scholl and Thomas Strunz.

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Samedi 14 Mars	18h30	Conférence Salah STETIE: "Francophonie, langue des autres"
Lundi 16 Mars	18h30	Conférence Gaston CHERPILLOD: Présentation littéraire
Mardi 17 Mars	20h30	Films "Le fleuve aux grandes eaux" de Frédéric BACK Divas de Jean-Jacques BEINEIX
Vendredi 20 Mars	10h00	Concours Exposition des dessins d'enfants: Illustration de contes francophones
	17h00	Vernissage Remise des prix aux gagnants
	18h00	Conférence Exposition de pastels: dessins et toiles par l'artiste peintre Paul DE GOBERT

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Iraq says U.S. impeding U.N. deal

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq on Tuesday accused the United States of blocking contracts under its oil-for-food deal with the United Nations.

"Three months have passed since the end of phase two of the memorandum of understanding... and there are still 21 contracts suspended by the U.S. representative at the U.N. Sanctions Committee," an Iraqi trade ministry source told the official Iraqi news agency (INA).

"Despite the fact that the contracts concluded with foreign firms are clear and the materials listed are checked and endorsed by the U.N. representative, the U.S. representative at the Sanctions Committee is creating pretexts to suspend them, claiming that

they need further information about the contracts," the source added.

The United Nations has proposed that Iraq's oil-for-food deal, which allows it to sell \$2 billion worth of oil every six months and use some of the proceeds to buy food and medicine, be expanded to \$5.25 billion every six months.

Baghdad says this would still not allow enough humanitarian supplies to reach ordinary Iraqis suffering under sanctions imposed by the United Nations after Iraq occupied Kuwait in 1990.

Iraq has said that it can anyway pump only \$4 billion worth of oil every six months because its sanctions-hit oil facilities need to be repaired. U.N. Secretary-General Kofi

Annan is sending a technical team to Iraq on Thursday to check Iraq's oil facilities.

The trade ministry source said the U.S. had put other contracts on hold on the ground that the final beneficiary should be pinpointed, the bodies receiving them should be known, and means of distributing them should be made clear to the U.N. observers.

Iraq has voiced reservations about the oil-for-food programme, saying it is a poor substitute for lifting sanctions, and insisting on its right to set spending priorities.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Said Al-Sahhaf on Monday met Mr. Annan in New York at the start of a week of talks on the new oil-for-food programme. He then saw the new U.N.

Deputy Secretary-General Louise Frechette of Canada, who will now be in charge of the programme. U.N. spokesman Fred Eckhard said.

The new programme cannot begin until a plan is worked out for distributing goods, the main purpose of Mr. Sahhaf's negotiations.

In a letter to the Security Council last month, Mr. Sahhaf rejected key parts of the new programme — specific categories designated by the United Nations of how much Iraq should spend for food, medicine, water, education, electricity repairs and other sectors.

U.S. to deport Iraqis working with CIA to overthrow Saddam

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Six Iraqis who were brought here in 1996 after participating in failed CIA-backed plots to overthrow Iraqi President Saddam Hussein may be deported back to Iraq, The New York Times said Wednesday.

Kept in a California jail, the six men were declared a threat to U.S. national security on Monday by a federal immigration judge, who determined they could be returned to Iraq, where according to their lawyers they could face execution.

The court ruling passed Monday declaring the six Iraqis "a danger to the national security of the United States" was so secret that the defendants' lawyers were not allowed to read it.

Besides protesting their deportation to a likely death — in Iraq they are considered traitors — the suspects said the United States offered them refuge when the two CIA plots against President Hussein failed.

But when they arrived here, they said, they were promptly locked up inside an immigration prison in California where they have languished ever since.

"We came to this land legally, on account of the U.S. government, and they put us in a jail," said Ali Yassin Mohammad Karim, who worked for the Iraqi Congress in northern Iraq.

Their lawyers complain that because of answers too secret to discuss in open court, they were not allowed to read the

judge's ruling or cross-examine Federal Bureau of Investigation agents who testified against their clients.

The Iraqis said they had worked with two resistance groups in Iraq which received tens of millions of dollars from the CIA to undermine President Hussein.

When the secret plots collapsed in mid-1996, the six men along with 600 other Iraqis fled to Turkey and were later evacuated to Guam, then brought to California where they were imprisoned.

Last year, they told the daily, they were falsely accused of being Iraqi spies, charges they attributed to infighting among the members of the Iraqi resistance.

Dubai bans women from cafes serving waterpipes

DUBAI (R) — UAE member Dubai has banned women from cafes serving waterpipes because they have become "places for immoral activities," the emirate's police chief said in remarks published on Wednesday.

Major General Dhahi Khalifa Tamim said the regulation, which took effect on Thursday, was part of a broader move restricting the operations of "shisha" (waterpipe) cafes.

Dubai earlier this week banned shisha smoking in cafes after midnight for moral and health reasons.

"The shisha cafes have given rise to social and security problems," Maj. Gen. Tamim told the daily Gulf News.

"We live in a country which has social and Islamic restrictions, and we will fight anything which contradicts our morality," he said. "It is not good for a woman to sit among men and smoke the shisha."

Maj. Gen. Tamim said the move followed complaints by residents living near the shisha cafes. He said the new regulation applied to independent cafes as well as those run by hotels.

"We have informers at each hotel and many of them were shut because they violated the rules," he was quoted as saying.

Shishas, also known as "nubia-bubbles" or "hookahs," are served in cafes across the UAE and are popular among UAE nationals as well as foreigners.

Hacker turns Netanyahu Internet site into porn display

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Internet surfers seeking information about Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife, Sarah, on an Israeli government Web site were shocked recently to find pictures of naked women appear on their computer screen, officials said Wednesday.

Officials in Mr. Netanyahu's office said a computer hacker had succeeded in creating alternative Internet sites with addresses practically identical to that of the prime minister's official site (www.pmo.gov.il).

The hacker filled his sites with pornographic photographs which were only discovered thanks to a rash of telephone calls from astonished Internet users, the officials said. The pirate sites were closed on Tuesday and authorities have launched an investigation into the incident.

An Israeli hacker known only by his Internet signature Analyzer caused a bigger stir this month by reportedly breaking into Internet sites run by the U.S. military.



PATHFINDER DEAD ON MARS: The Pathfinder/Sojourner spacecraft, contained in the group of airbags (lower R) is shown as it prepares to land on the surface of Mars in this artist's conception. Scientists failed in a bid to contact the Mars Pathfinder Tuesday, declaring the craft officially "dead" four months after the end of a mission that produced the closest look at the red planet's surface. Team members at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory said goodbye to the lander and its little rover Sojourner 250 days after its dramatic landing on July 4 last year — and shortly after getting no response to one last set of commands (Reuters photo)

Big five see Annan to back revival of Cyprus talks

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Envoys from the five permanent members of the Security Council met U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan on Tuesday to express support for U.N. efforts to revive negotiations aimed at ending the division of Cyprus, council sources said.

Mr. Annan's special adviser for Cyprus, Diego Cordovez, who was present at the meeting between Mr. Annan and representatives from the United States, Russia, Britain, China and France, will begin a visit to Nicosia on March 17, U.N. sources said.

Mr. Cordovez, a former Ecuadorean foreign minister, is expected to visit Athens on March 23 and Ankara on March 24 before flying to Geneva two days later to give a briefing for envoys appointed to follow developments in the Cyprus question.

Cyprus has been virtually partitioned since 1974 when Turkish troops took over the north of the island in reaction to a coup in Nicosia engineered by the junta then ruling Greece.

Talks aimed at reuniting Cyprus as a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation have contin-

ued sporadically for decades.

They have been on hold for the past few months, pending elections that resulted in the re-election last month of President Glafcos Clerides, who heads the internationally-recognized Greek Cypriot-led government.

Mr. Clerides, representing the Greek Cypriots, and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash, held their most recent inconclusive face-to-face meetings at Troubeck, New York, last July, and at Glion, Switzerland, in August.

Israeli right wing blasts TV series on 50th anniversary

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A documentary series on Israel's history being broadcast by public television to mark the state's jubilee has come under fire from Jewish settlers and rightwingers for being pro-Palestinian.

Israel's Deputy Education Minister Moshe Peled has called for the weekly series "Tikumi" (Renaissance), which traces major events in the Jewish state's 50-year history, to be banned.

"This series is political and distorts history. As presented, it resembles a programme for the renaissance of the Palestinian people," Mr. Peled said.

Mr. Peled, who is close to Jewish settlers, said he had received dozens of complaints from viewers indignant about the tone of the series, particularly one programme about Israeli oppression of Arabs during the first years of the country's existence under a military regime.

Series presenter Yoram Gaon quit on Tuesday to protest at the preparation of a film about the start of Palestinian resistance in the 1970s, the Yediot Ahronot newspaper reported.

The documentary, using Palestine Liberation

Organisation archives, takes its title "Biladi-Biladi" from the Palestinian national anthem and presents the Palestinian vision of Israel as the enemy.

A right-leaning university researcher working on the series said that particular programme "would have a better place in a series on the 50th anniversary of Palestinian autonomy."

But leaving historian Yigal Elam said he believed Israel was "a sufficiently adult country to confront its past" adding that the series had attracted an exceptionally large audience.

Uproar in Knesset over Barak's remarks

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli deputy sparked uproar in parliament Wednesday by asking opposition leader Ehud Barak if he would have become a Nazi if born in pre-war Germany since he recently said he would have joined a "terrorist group" if born a Palestinian.

"What would Mr. Barak have answered if asked what he would have done during World War II if he had been born in Germany?" asked Michael Kleiner, a far-right member of the Gusher Party, from the Knesset podium.

The challenge to the leader of the Labour Party drew loud protests from the opposition benches which forced

speaker Dan Tichon to suspend the session.

Mr. Barak outraged the political right and embarrassed his own party last week by telling a television interviewer: "If I were a young Palestinian, I would choose to be part of a terrorist organisation."

Mr. Barak quickly tried to correct the statement, saying he meant to express understanding of Palestinians' national aspirations and frustration with the deadlock in peace negotiations under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

He went on to condemn attacks by Palestinian activists on innocent civilians.

But his remarks came back to haunt him Tuesday when a Hamas member on trial for killing 11 Israelis justified his actions by citing the Labour leader.

"Barak himself said that if he had been Palestinian he would have joined an armed resistance group," Ayman Qufishe told journalists during his trial before a military court.

"That's just what we did by becoming Hamas soldiers," he said, using the acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement, the main Palestinian group opposed to autonomy agreements signed by Palestinian President Yasser Arafat with Israel.



Indian group plans global 'fools' meet

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A private forum will hold a global conference of "fools" here on Friday to send out the message that people with no malice can harm none. A procession with floats led by a donkey will be the highlight of the event, said Ram Prakash Gupta, one of the organisers. "For us, the donkey is a symbol of reverence... all presentations are made before his majesty. The message... is that 'fools do not fight. They do not cheat and they remain at peace with each other.'" He added that the event was relevant to the current political atmosphere. "Can any country beat us in fooling around?" Gupta asked.

Pig hero is immortalised in cathedral carving

LONDON (AFP) — One of two British pigs which escaped from an abattoir to freedom and national fame, has been immortalised in a carving at an historic cathedral. One of the "Tamworth Two," Butch, has been carved on a pinnacle to grace the 13th century Lady Chapel of Hereford Cathedral. The tale of the two Ginger Tamworth pigs, which wriggled out of the hands of abattoir workers in Malmesbury and swam to safety across a river, provoked media frenzy. For days afterwards, they were celebrated fugitives, pursued by a posse of police, animal welfare workers and journalists. The pair were now live in luxury at an animal sanctuary.

Accused cookie thief says cop's song 'degrading'

OAKLAND (R) — A man accused of stealing a cookie has charged Oakland police with devising "the most degrading" punishment imaginable: forcing him to listen to a cop song "Escape, the Pina Colada song." Julian Aldarondo has filed a complaint with the Oakland police review board. "This is without a doubt the most degrading and humiliating experience I have ever encountered and... I am in a complete state of shock," Aldarondo said in a signed statement. Aldarondo was accused of swiping a ginger pecan cookie from the Critics Corner Cafe in Oakland before heading to a movie on June 13, 1997.

Wisconsin teen sets tall stilts record

ORLANDO (R) — A Wisconsin teenager who practised stilts walking in a farmyard silo set a world record for walking on the tallest stilts, officials at Universal Studios Florida said. "Tilim Travis" Wolf took 25 steps on stilts 12.5 metres tall, Skip Sherman, a senior executive at Universal, said. An official from the Guinness World Records verified the feat by 16-year-old Wolf, who broke the record held by his father, "Steady Eddy" Wolf, who walked on stilts 12.13 metres tall in 1988. "Stilts walking is really important to our family and I wanted to keep the tradition alive," Travis Wolf said.

'Bean' director lashes snobbery over film

LONDON (AFP) — The director behind the hit comedy film "Bean" is not a happy man. Mel Smith said snobbish judges have snubbed the movie because they don't "or can't, understand the juvenile, inane humour it contains." "Bean" stars Rowan Atkinson as a hapless Briton let loose on a prestigious U.S. art academy. It's certainly not subtle, but it appeals to all generations. Despite grossing \$216 million worldwide, making it one of Britain's most successful films ever, it failed to receive a single nomination for a Bafta award, the highest British honour a movie can get.

Hindu nationalists face major hitch as wrangling delays power bid

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Hindu nationalist hopes of coming to power in India hit a major hitch here Wednesday as the party failed to produce "documentary proof" that it could form a stable coalition, officials said.

The right-wing BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party, Indian People's Party) and its dozen allies spent the day locked in talks, trying to win enough support for their coalition following inconclusive February-March elections.

Party leader Atal Behari Vajpayee, invited to form a government by the Indian president on condition that he could ensure stability, remained out of sight Wednesday as the negotiations dragged on.

Officials said Mr. Vajpayee's visit to the presidential palace, expected Wednesday, had been put off. "Vajpayee is not going to meet Narayanan today," a Vajpayee aide said.

A presidential spokesman, meanwhile, told AFP: "We

have so far not received any request from Vajpayee for an appointment."

The BJP and its dozen disparate allies are hoping to form a government following staggered polls which ended last week, leaving a badly-fractured parliament.

They are better placed than their rivals to come to power but still need to win over minor parties and independents to their camp.

Mr. Vajpayee, 71, was invited Tuesday to form a government.

But Indian President K.R. Narayanan, worried about the country's political instability which has led to five governments within two years, demanded proof a national coalition could survive.

The BJP, accused by critics of being sectarian and a threat to India's secular constitution, and its supporters emerged from the polls as the largest bloc but fell just short of a majority in the 545-seat parliament.

The BJP is hoping to form a majority government for the

first time.

BJP spokesman Venkiah Naidu remained defiant Wednesday, telling AFP: "With the support of post-poll allies our tally will reach 262."

He said if some parties abstained, the BJP-led block would be able to win a confidence vote.

He added: "We will be able to provide a stable government and also prove its majority on the floor of the house."

Indian shares, however, took a beating Wednesday. The 30-shares Bombay Stock Exchange sensitive index, the country's main stockmarket, dropped 46.45 points, or 1.22 per cent, to 3,751.80 points.

Stockbrokers said the market was concerned about the incoming government's prospects.

India has had a caretaker government since November. Earlier this month economic growth forecasts for the fiscal 1998-99 were scaled down from seven to five per cent.